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Applied Synectics to Teach Community Development for Living and Learning
Communities to Resident Advisors and Community Assistants at California State
University Monterey Bay

Action Research Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Master of Arts in Education

College of Professional Studies
California State University Monterey Bay
Spring 2011

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Signature Page

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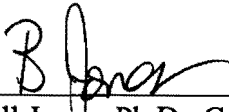
Christina Sierra-Jones

Approved by the following Masters of Arts in Education Thesis Committee:



Nicholas Meier, Ph.D., Advisor

May 25, 2011
Date



Bill Jones, Ph.D., Capstone Facilitator

5/25/2011
Date

Acknowledgements

Whatever the weaknesses of this thesis, they would have been far greater without the ongoing support of professors, colleagues, family and friends. It is an honor to thank those who have generously gave ongoing support, patience, guidance and assistance to help me achieve success in my academic pursuits.

Family

I am grateful to my supportive family who listened to my research rants and raves and provided me comfort and relief from the pressures of research and writing. I recognize the sacrifices they made to support my goals. My daughter *Sarah* helped by often working with me as a classroom or office assistant. My sons *Brandon* and *John* took on more responsibilities and often made it their task to make me smile and laugh. I am especially thankful to my husband, friend, and colleague, *Gerald Jones* whose wise insights, inventiveness and comedic qualities brings me joy and helps me grow.

Friends

I thank my friends who read and edited my work; *Vanessa Henry* and *Maura Mecchella*. I owe my deepest gratitude to Vanessa for her willingness to help and being a wellspring of strength when I found myself overwhelmed and unable to write. Most importantly she helped me how I needed to be helped, when I required it most. Maura, I am thankful for your thorough and rigorous review of my first complete and very rough manuscript.

Faculty, Professional & Paraprofessional Staff at CSUMB

I am grateful to the Faculty at CSUMB whose contributions shaped my research and writing. My thesis Advisor *Nicholas Meier Ph.D.*, and the other faculty in the College of Professional Studies *Carolina Serna Ph.D.*, *Cathi Draper-Rodriguez Ph.D.*, & *Mark*

O'Shea Ph.D., & Bill Jones Ph.D. I am appreciative of the Student Housing and Residential Life staff; *Resident Advisors and Community Assistants from 2006-2011* who participated in community development trainings and co-trainers *Kristen Halverson-Muenzer* and *Jeff Herring* and supervisors who supported my professional growth and research efforts *Dean Kennedy, Joshua Goin, Andrea Dominguez-Blanco & Alexandra Froehlich*. I am indebted to the faculty of my undergraduate education in the Social and Behavioral Sciences Department at CSUMB, particularly *Dr. Ruben G. Mendoza* and *Dr. Juan José Gutiérrez* for believing in me!

Tribute to Trailblazing Women

I offer tribute to the women who powerfully influenced my academic career and have inspired me by their seemingly fearless pursuit of their dreams despite great adversity in their lives. *Lola, my grandmother*, faced rattle-snakes, armed guards and rough desert terrain at ten years old to gain her freedom yet always told me that real freedom comes from knowledge. I thank *my mother in-law Janice Jones*, for setting the example of how to break free from fear to achieve your dreams. Janice blazed a path to CSUMB which now her son and I have both followed. I thank my friend *Denise Noel*, for her continual optimism and can do it attitude. Denise encouraged me to get a Adult ed. credential and together we have successfully written & implemented two grants! Denise inspired me by achieving her Master's degree, while being a mother, wife, working fulltime! I thank my friend *Shari Harder* for her friendship & leadership. She has been there as friend & colleague from day one of undergrad to the last day of post-grad. It has been a wonderful learning journey and I am thankful for her smiles, laughter and ongoing support.

Abstract

This action research investigated the use of the synectics instructional model to teach community development to Resident Advisors and Community Assistants at California State University Monterey Bay. Feedback from participants of the trainings was collected using online surveys and focus groups. The teacher-researcher also maintained a reflective journal of the training sessions. Findings supported that synectics promoted concept development and creative thinking and was a useful problem solving tool to organize training sessions and schedules. The research suggested combining the synectic models and adding more learning strategies improved the effectiveness of the model for teaching and learning.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This action research project created and implemented a community development curriculum for Resident Advisors and Community Assistants at California State University Monterey Bay. Synectics, a creative problem solving process was used to promote innovation and critical thinking in the students. Three synectics instructional models (Gordon, 1961; Gunter, Estes, & Mintz, 2007; Prince, 1970; Mauzy & Harriman, 2003) and over twenty learning strategies were combined into themes and exercises to teach community development. The synectics instructional model was used in conjunction with Social Reconstruction Ideology (Schiro, 2008) to fulfill the goals of this action research: create a research-based community development curriculum unit, learn how to use synectics, and improve my teaching.

Statement of the Problem

I have served as Community Assistant (CA) at California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB) since 2005, and have been assisting with training since 2006. I became interested in teaching community development after completing three weeks of training in 2005. After the training, I did not feel prepared to take on the work I was expected to do. I realized I had not learned or perhaps had not been taught the skills I needed to begin community development as expected. Other staff shared that they also struggled with developing community, especially in the apartment setting which was unique from dormitory settings. I discussed this concern with my supervisors who felt that training had been adequate. The following year, feedback from 2007 Fall Training surveys conducted by CSUMB Student Housing & Residential Life, revealed multiple requests for training on community development even though two sessions had been offered.

Many of the topics and skill sets being covered in the RA/CA training at CSUMB fit into the category of collaborative leadership. Collaborative leadership is a critical element of

community development that involves a variety of skills; including learning about leadership, decision making, conflict resolution, community assessment, mobilization, intervention, advocacy, marketing and evaluation are all skill sets needed to enact community development (Fawcet et al. 2009; Rabinowitz, 2009). At CSUMB these collaborative leadership skill sets are included in training over a three week training period each fall. Community development topics had been covered through collaborative leadership training topics yet the larger concepts were lost. The strategy of embedded content into broader concepts was not an effective method for either these topics or this group.

The problem with embedding community development content into collaborative leadership topics is that trainees are required to infer what they are to learn, and even instructors may be unclear of what to focus on. However, there are reasons community development training and collaborative leadership are presented embedded. Student affairs and collaborative leadership researchers have cited funding and time as major barriers to furthering the in-depth training needed to teach the skill sets to carry out collaborative leadership for community development (Fawcet, Francisco, Shultz & Nagy, 2009; Rabinowitz, 2009). Moreover, it is common for collaborative leadership and community development training to not be taught at all (Fawcet et al, 2009; Rabinowitz, 2009).

To uncover the larger problems with collaborative leadership, community development training and RA/CA training as whole not just at CSUMB, I continued my preliminary research. I had conversations with supervisors, visited other campuses, attended conferences, and continued reading about the issue. I was not finding the answers I was after. In 2008 I learned that the associate director of Student Housing and Residential Life at CSUMB, Dean Kennedy was completing his dissertation on RA training. His dissertation identified that the Resident

Advisors roles have progressed greatly and made evident that RA training has changed very little since its inception in the 1960s (Kennedy, 2010).

Student Housing and Residential Life at CSUMB was progressive in providing training on collaborative leadership and communicating to RA/CAs that they were community builders. Nevertheless, my personal experience, feedback from other participants and recent research supported that the training could be improved. Based on the feedback there were several themes that emerged that pointed to problems with training: The issue of embedded content, too much new information being given to RA/CAs every day for up to three full weeks, opportunity to put skill sets into real practice was lacking, and/ or poor instruction. These are all factors that had the potential to negatively impact learning.

For this research I chose to affect change where I could. I chose to reconstruct training sessions and scheduling for the greater purpose of clarifying educational content on community development for RA/CAs. I also embarked on a journey to improve my own skills as an instructor providing RA/CA training.

Background

During my second year as a CA, in 2006, I became involved in planning, developing and implementing training sessions. In 2009, at the inception of this research I explicitly taught community development. I had been teaching early childhood education for ten years and parent education for eight years. I felt confident that my teaching skills would easily transfer to higher education. This belief was challenged when I failed to teach desired concepts in those first training sessions to RA/CAs from 2006 to 2009. These experiences led to a desire to find more effective ways to teach community development and to strengthen my skills as an instructor at the college age level.

The Master of Arts in Education program provided me a forum for learning and support for research to take on this action research project. I learned about the instructional models, learning strategies and curriculum theory. I developed a research design using the synectics instructional model and the Social Reconstruction ideology. This provided a format for offering content specific instruction on community development rather than embedded and could expose compressed conflicts in the RA/CA role that impacts community development.

One such compressed conflict in the RA/CA role is the dual role of enforcing rules and fostering close interactions among residents. I learned it was a delicate balancing act to enforce rules and simultaneously build positive relationships with residents. Experience quickly taught me that community development was at the heart of the RA/CA role and it that it was a necessary but often elusive concept. I had observed that when a RA/CA focused overtly on enforcing the rules it could undermine social justice and healthy community

RA/CAs are not alone in their task to build community, develop and implement training or any of the other the tasks they do. They are supported by one another, their directors, their department and other campus partners who are all invested in the campus community for the overall success of each student, the living and learning communities and the university. Because of this, I had the support of Student Housing & Residential Life at CSUMB to pursue this research for the improvement of RA/CA training.

Research Question

How does my use of the Synectics Instructional Model effect my instruction of the Community Assistants and Resident Advisors?

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Researchers value living and learning communities and the role of paraprofessional staff to aid in student retention, promote positive outcomes for students and to provide educationally purposeful activities, both inside and outside the classroom (ACPA, 1994; Astin, 1973, 1977; Boyer, 1987, 1990; Chickering & Gramson, 1987; Matthews, 1994; Pike, Schroeder & Berry, 1997; Stassen, 2003; Upcraft & Pilato, 1982). In this review of the literature, I will describe living and learning communities. They are the backdrop in which this research takes place. This is followed by a discussion of how living and learning communities help students to form a sense of community and how residential staffs support this process. The theoretical framework of Social Reconstruction is presented and this theory is applied to the role of the teacher and students participating in the community development trainings. Lastly, I discuss the history, purpose and applications of the synectics model. Synectics is a process of creating new ways of thinking and doing (Gordon, 1961; Mauzy & Harriman, 2003; Prince, 1970). The synectics model is a process of deconstructing and reconstructing knowledge that is fitting with the Social reconstruction ideology for community development training.

Living and Learning Communities

Living and learning communities (LLCs) can take many forms. Typically LLCs are on-campus residential living arrangements with a formal or informal curricular component. They may be linked to academic courses, receive academic support outside the classroom, and/or involve a familiar group that focuses on social activities (Learning Communities at Colorado State University, 2005). Academically focused types may combine groups of students taking two or more courses together (Brower & Dettinger, 1998). This has a social benefit as it ensures that students see one another regularly. Students build relationships by spending a substantial amount of time together engaged in common intellectual actions (Zhao & Kuh, 2004). It has

been observed that linking social and academic outcomes for students strengthens the social and intellectual connections between students, which, in turn, help to build a sense of community (Gabelnick, MacGregor, Matthews, and Smith, 1990; Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

According to Lenning and Ebbers (1999), learning communities take four generic forms: curricular, classroom, residential and student type.

1. Curricular learning communities are made up of students co-enrolled in two or more courses that are linked by a common theme;
2. Classroom learning communities treat the classroom as a center for building community by using cooperative learning strategies and group process learning activities as integrating pedagogical approaches;
3. Residential learning communities organize on-campus living arrangements so that students live in close physical proximity to one another, which increases the opportunities for out-of-class interactions and supplementary learning opportunities; and
4. Student-type learning communities are designed target specific student groups; similar academic interests, academically under-prepared, historically underrepresented, or students with disabilities.

In general LLCs serve to support students by providing a safe, inclusive, diverse living and learning environment that fosters student success, personal growth, and professional development. However they are implemented they are designed to increase student interest and success (Learning Communities at Colorado State University, 2005).

Sense of Community

Living and learning communities open pathways for student success, personal growth, and professional development and leadership through a sense of community. A sense of community is a feeling of belonging which involves the feelings, beliefs, and expectations that

one fits in the group and has a place there (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). The individual who feels connected to a group or community will identify with a role with a statement like “In my group we...” or “I am part of the group.” LLCs provide a forum for this sense of community to built and experienced by students.

Living and learning communities on college campuses form groups with unique characteristics and purpose that is bound by a commonalities. Institutions have shared culture, symbolism, values and roles (Goode, 1957). These cultural values integrate new members. The ties that bind community are based in likeness and expand overtime to increase uniqueness (Durkheim, 1933/1997). Each community evolves and has unique characteristics and identity. Living and learning communities also have identities are unique and evolve.

The role of residential staff for living and learning communities.

The role of residential staff for LLCs is to provide positive support for the students who live in them and uphold the values and goals of the institution. Residential staffs are seen as community leaders, who encourage residents to respect one another, get involved with their community and provide information and resources to students (Cornell University, 2010). Residential staffs perform many roles and responsibilities to foster healthy communities. Training makes an effort to prepare them for what they will be expected to accomplish.

A single residential staff member can be expected to accomplish over seventy-seven separate job related tasks that must be adhered to and upheld at all times. They are peer counselors, community builders, leaders, academic resource people, event hosts, educators, emergency responders, rule enforcers, conflict mediators and administrators (Cornell University, 2010; UCLA Residential Assistant, ND). Training is an effort to prepare the residential staff for these extensive responsibilities. There is typically a two to three week pre-service training. It is a combination of bonding, leadership development and learning how to

address common situations that residential staff are likely to encounter (Syracuse University, 2007; RA Training Sample Schedules, ND). Residential staffs' responsibilities are likely to have some variation from campus to campus.

The complexity of the residential staff role is more than most staff can conceptualize in pre-service training. Residential staffs soon discover that they are spending significant amounts of time on building a sense of community. They are spending the majority of their time getting to know residents, making introductions, generating enthusiasm for community and completing administrative tasks in addition to fulfilling their own academic requirements (UC Berkeley, ND; UCLA Residential Assistant, ND; Cornell University, 2010;).

Residential staffs need support and tools to build a sense of community for residents and maintaining balance in their lives. It is a challenge to unify individuals into living and learning communities. The biggest challenge is getting the students to see themselves as members of the community. Individuals belong to many overlapping communities, and may not recognize their roles because they have always been a part of them (Goode, 1957). Community, like culture, is essentially invisible and the most visible at its intersections (Goode, 1957, Geertz, 1973; Greenfield, Raeff, & Quiroz, 1996; Sierra, 2005). It is easier to see what is different culturally than what is the same.

A theoretical lens can help RA/CAs to understand what is happening in the community. At the beginning of any group formation, membership roles and responsibilities are often unclear. Some members are anxious while others are simply excited about their new community and environment (Tuckman, 1965). Group development theory offers direction and purpose for leadership. This theory is applied as a tool to aid the residential staff member in understanding

the stages that groups or individuals progress through. This theory offers suggestions of how they may respond (See Appendix A: [Theoretical lens for ongoing community assessment](#)).

Theoretical Framework: Social Reconstruction Ideology

The group development theory is useful to the residential staff in understanding groups within community. The Social Reconstruction ideology is the theoretical framework used for this research. It is used to view teaching, learning, and curriculum. The Social Reconstruction ideology is oriented in a social and historical perspective. Educators who promote these ideals believe that education is affected by societal problems that will not and cannot be expected to resolve without intervention (Schiro, 2008). The historical record provides evidence that societies go through periods of growth, development, stability, breakdown and collapse. As George Counts wrote during the Great Depression:

Today, as social institutions crumble and society is shaken by deep convulsions that threaten its very existence; many persons are proclaiming that education provides the only true road to safety. They are even saying that it should be brought into the service of building a new social order. (Counts, 1934, p. 533 in Schiro, 2008)

These breakdowns are ever present in society, as easily can be seen in periods of boom and bust (Kennedy & Mehra, 1985).

Societal problems are in constant flux. Social Reconstruction of community is perceived as an answer. Society is repeatedly threatened on many fronts: poverty, racism, sexism, gang warfare, crime, illiteracy, domestic violence, inadequate health care, and unemployment to name a few (Schiro, 2008). In *The Spirit of Community* (Etzioni, 1993) and *Habits of the Heart* (Bellah, Madsen, Sullivan, Swidler, & Tipton, 1985) authors claimed that individuals have many rights and responsibilities as a group that were not being fulfilled. They proposed a foundation of shared values and a renewed commitment to community for change (Bellah et al,

1985; Etzioni, 1993). Dewey, often referred to as the Father of Progressive American Education, recognized that there was no separation of community from education (Dewey, 1916). Dewey observed that community required its members to come together under common aims, beliefs, aspirations and knowledge (1916). Social Reconstruction models in society and education grow out of concern that democracy, civic engagement or participation in community development are lacking.

While Social Reconstructionists may disagree on how to change things they often share a vision for society “that extend[s] the principles of liberty, equality, justice, and freedom to the widest possible set of institution[s]” and people (Giroux, 2005, p. 74; Schiro, 2008, p. 134). “For Social Reconstructionists, education provides the means by which society is to be reconstructed” (Schiro, 2008, p. 134).

Roles of the teacher and students in community development training.

The community development curriculum created and taught for this action research project used the social reconstruction ideology as a framework. Social Reconstruction curriculum ideology was applied to provide students with information to perceive problems in society, envision a healthier society and take action to change what is unhealthy, dysfunctional or in need of improvement for greater social justice and a healthier society (Schiro, 2008). The role of the teacher in the social reconstruction model is extended from technician to critical thinking theoretician, practitioner, able to combine theory, imagination and techniques (Giroux, 1988). “Educators need to assume the role of leaders in the struggle for social and economic justice” (Giroux, 2006, p. 9; Schiro, p. 134). Educators must connect what they teach to the lives of students out of concern for democracy (Giroux, 2006).

In the Social Reconstruction ideology learning best occurs when a student confronts a real social crisis and participates in the construction of a solution of that crisis (Schiro, 2008). The community development training in this action research is at best a simulation. However, learning is viewed as an ongoing process and action that RA/CAs will engage in over time in which their comprehension and ability to carry out community development tasks increase. Paulo Freire supports this belief on learning from the Social Reconstructionist perspective when he writes,

A reader does not suddenly comprehend what is being read or studied, in a snap, miraculously. Comprehension needs to be worked forged, by those who read and study; as subjects of the action, they must seek to employ appropriate instruments in order to carry out the task. For this very reason, reading and studying form a challenging task, one requiring patience and perseverance. (Freire, 1973/2009, p. 23)

The role of the students, in this case the RA/CAs, is to learn and increase their knowledge and skills. Furthermore, become self-propelled learners, who are provided with the information needed for new action and self-correction (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, & Miller, 2003). Training is intended to teach them to engage in critical reflection for community development and action.

The content of the training seeks to build on the students' knowledge of community development and teaches them to intentionally develop healthier communities. The Social Reconstruction model recognizes that knowledge of the most worth is a set of social ideals, a commitment to those ideals, and an understanding of how to implement those ideals (Schiro, 2008). Community development training must strike a balance between offering specific content on community development and teaching how to think and respond in a variety of situations.

The teacher is the role models in the training sessions just as the RA/CAs are the role models in their communities. The tone and context in which training is provided is crucial to communicating respect. Freire connects social ideals to actions:

No one can learn tolerance in a climate of irresponsibility, which does not produce democracy. The act of tolerating requires a climate in which limits may be established, in which there are principles to be respected. That is why tolerance is not coexistence with the intolerable. Under an authoritarian regime, in which authority is abused, or a permissive one, in which freedom is not limited, one can hardly learn tolerance.

Tolerance requires respect, discipline, and ethics. (Freire, 1973/2009, p. 42)

The teacher is responsible for setting a caring, respectful tone, modeling ethical and democratic ideals and building a community of learners. In this research the synectics instructional models will aid in achieving these social reconstruction ideals.

Instructional Model: Synectics

Synectics is a creative problem solving technique that has been found applicable in forming creative corporate and educational communities. The word Synectics is derived from the Greek word synectikos which means "bringing forth together" or "bringing different things into unified connection" (Gordon, 1961). It invokes the creative process of discovering unifying themes in seemingly disconnected parts (Gordon, 1961; Prince, 1970; Gunter et al., 2007). The value of synectic thinking is that creativity is fostered in the learner which allows the learner to uncover meanings for themselves (Gunter et al., 2007). Exploring the basics of a concept or issues central to the point, then taken down to their bare elements, and then the elements are reassembled to create new insights for all types of problems (Gunter et al., 2007; Saskatoon Public Schools, 2009).

Synectics was developed by George M. Prince in conjunction with W.J.J. Gordon of the Invention Design Group of Arthur D. Little in a research effort to determine what procedures lead to creativity (Gordon, 1961; Prince, 1970). Decades of research in the 1950s and 60s, yielded thousands of hours of audio and video recordings of inventing and problem solving sessions to learn how the process of invention occurred. Based on their findings, they developed the theoretical elements of the Synectics model, identifying two basic and interrelated approaches that others could follow to increase creativity in business. The first theoretical ideal promoted imaginative speculation and the second ideal delineated disciplined ways for group members to behave when encouraged to value creativity (Prince, 1970). These concepts were first published in *Synectics: the Development of Creative Capacity* (Gordon, 1961) and later a clearer and more practical guide was published in *The Practice of Creativity* (Prince, 1970) which fast became a best-selling trade book.

Gordon and Prince's first procedures of promoting creative learning sessions centered on a model dependent on a leader to facilitate sessions and lead the group through the process (Prince, 1970). Their second set of procedures focused on group climate. They identified major barriers in leadership and member roles which discouraged the creative process and hindered the development of a stimulating workplace climate. Characteristics which obstructed creativity in the workplace were identified as: competition, not listening, lack of respect or trust to share new ideas, fear of failure, low energy or motivation, not including all members, manipulation, abuse of power in leadership roles, and not referring to experts in the field for advice (Prince, 1970). To promote innovation, solve problems, increase team morale and productivity, *Creativity Inc.: Building an inventive organization* (2003) picked up where the founders of

Synectics left off acknowledging obstacle to creativity and an accepting climate, while adding a set of procedures for action.

Synectics has mostly been used in corporate settings, from electronic technology companies, such as Microsoft, AT&T, Hewlett-Packard, SPSS Inc., to entertainment companies such as Hallmark, Disney, Universal Studios, to other innovative companies like 3M and CitiBank (Mauzy & Harriman, 2003). Eventually, Synectics made its way into education as it has far reaching applications to many situations beyond invention sessions and the corporate world. Synectics in education is classified as a concept development instructional model (Gunter et al., 2007), which distinguishes between two phases: 1) making the strange familiar and 2) making the familiar strange. The Synectics Instructional Model as described in K-12 curriculum texts involves starting with a body of knowledge and integrating a series of techniques designed to encourage creative problem-solving or imaginative activities.

Synectic Thinking. Synectic thinking is like metacognition in that it requires the learner to reflect on their own thinking however extends it into action. Metacognition is “thinking about thinking” (Martinez, 2006, p.1) and an awareness of how one learns (Veenman, 2005). Where synectics is a “continued iteration between the ideas and their constructive evaluation, the process moves to a course of action that is new and feasible and has the commitment of the individual who has been doing the directing (Nolan, 2003, p.26). In this research, synectic thinking refers the process of being aware of one’s thinking and how one learns to apply it to solve problems, create new meanings and make a commitment to applying the newly constructed knowledge through a course of action.

Applied Synectics. Synectics in this research was used as an instructional model and theoretical support. The models were used to plan training sessions and informed the sequence

of content to be presented in community development trainings. It was also used as a cooperative learning strategy. Synectics was applied as a theory to organize thinking, as a tool for reflection, and as a system to organize, analyze and interpret data. This research sought out praxis, a practice of theory into action, of synectics in breadth and depth. Synectics is further described in the chapters three and four.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This action research employed three primary qualitative data collection methods; online surveys, focus groups and a researchers' journal log, to investigate the effects of synectics to reconstruct community development training for Resident Advisors (RA) and Community Assistants (CA) at California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB). Resident Advisors and Community Assistants serve the university to support student success in living and learning communities at CSUMB. Online surveys and focus groups provided feedback on affect, content learning, instruction and solicited suggestions. A researcher's journal recorded instructional adjustments. These methods were selected to provide multiple perspectives about what was happening in training, which instructional methods had the greatest positive effect on learning about community development and what was working or not working in implementing the synectics instructional model.

The following chapter provides detail on the CSUMB setting in which this research took place, the participants, the selection process of participants, and the unique differences between the two participant pools of Resident Advisors and Community Assistants. The procedure section provides the synectics lesson plans used. Data collection methods are described in relation to their particular value to this research. Ultimately, an overview of the data collection methods explains how the data was analyzed for this research.

Research Design

This research design followed the RA/CA training schedule. Fall and winter trainings are when most of the actual training takes place. Since this is naturally when RA/CA training occurs and covers the most content the research design sampled training days from Fall and Winter training. As a member of the Training and Development Committee I led many more

trainings than were used for this research. The research that was collected for this research focused on training sessions with content on community development only.

The RA/CA employer, Student Housing & Residential Life administered online surveys post training. The surveys were used for this research to review what was working, what was need improvement and then plan the next session accordingly. It was part of the research design to use the systems already in place and did not ask participants to do anything extra or different from what they normally did. Nevertheless, specific accommodations were needed as part of the research design to increase the ethical considerations of this research design.

Ethical Considerations

This research design had to plot a course of research that overcomes several ethical complications. RA/CA training was mandatory and this is against a fundamental ethical rule that participation in research be voluntary. I was using data collected by the participant's employer and while this is not unethical, presented a challenge to collecting data of high integrity. Since the RA/CAs were acting and engaging as they normally would in training, and in line with ethics, an extra effort needed to be made to separate my research efforts from the rest of their normal training schedule.

The research design considered these ethical dilemmas and provided accommodations to overcome each. The issue of being mandatory and part of their normal schedule was resolved by providing written notification to participants and then soliciting signed consent from participants making clear to participants that I was conducting research within the framework of the training they were required to attend. Secondly, I presented the option for the RA/CAs to participate voluntarily in training sessions selected as part of my research or attend an alternate session and not have their survey data used. Lastly, in addressing the integrity of the data, multiple qualitative data collection methods were employed to increase the integrity of the

information received. Most importantly, in addressing the data RA/CAs were completing for their employer, it was negotiated that the online surveys would not track email or IP addresses or any other information that could link responses back to the participant. It was also negotiated that the RA/CAs would be provided the information on the anonymity of the online surveys to encourage greater participation in the online surveys as well as yield more honest and candid responses.

Limitations

The data used for this research came from teacher observations, focus groups and online surveys of one group of RA/CAs on one college campus. The data presented represents a small cohort of approximately one third of the RA/CAs on this college campus. Therefore, it is important to note that while this research may serve as a guide for other educators, educational settings and individuals are highly specific. Any group of RA/CAs will have individuals with different needs and varying backgrounds that will affect how synectics is used in other settings. Furthermore, this research is limited by the perspective of the teacher-researcher conducting this research. I am a RA/CA and a part of the group that used for this research. I have been through the training sessions that these RA/CAs were going through. As the teacher-researcher I have sought to minimize the effects of my own biases on this research by being aware of bias.

Setting

This qualitative action research focused on researcher teaching and learning as a student affairs educator of student leaders and paraprofessional residential staff at California State University Monterey Bay (CSUMB). Training sessions were held on the CSUMB campus for Community Assistants (CA) and Resident Advisors, (RA). These student leaders compose paraprofessional staffs who serve residential learning communities on the CSUMB campus in both Main and East campuses.

Main Campus is a dormitory setting located in the heart of the campus and walking distance to classes. East Campus setting is three miles directly down the road from Main Campus in renovated apartments. Students living in on-campus housing environments are provided a Student Housing and Residential Life staff member to increase their academic and social success by aiding students to adjust to their living and learning environment. Residential Life staff members are Resident Advisors (RA) for the dormitories and Community Assistants (CA) for the East Campus apartments. Living and learning environments are assigned either by street in the East Campus apartments or by floor in the Main Campus dormitories. The department of Student Housing and Residential Life addresses students' needs in relation to their success in their living and learning environments.

At CSUMB, the Main Campus housing dormitories are for all ages of students without children living with them. The East Campus apartments are only for upper classmen who are age 21 and older, have successfully completed 90 units of academic work, or have a family status. Family status means that is they have children in their care, are married or can prove domestic partnership and financial responsibility for one another for over one year (Residential Life East Campus, 2009). Additionally, CSUMB Student Housing and Residential Life partners with local education institutions and provides East Campus housing to students of Monterey College of Law and Moss Landing Marine Labs. Thus the composition of East Campus is a mixed group of CSUMB students of all ages and majors, non-CSUMB students, and relatives of students.

The greater diversity and independence of apartment style living in East Campus makes community development a greater challenge than on Main Campus, where there is a smaller and more homogenous group consisting of only CSUMB students. In dormitories, it is clearly

known who is residing in a unit and how many students are served. Main Campus RAs have an average of 23 dormitory units they are responsible for with a maximum of 46 residents. CAs are responsible for an average of 47 apartments, with upwards of one hundred residents living on one street under the leadership of a single Community Assistant. It can be unclear who is living in each unit or what their relationship is to one another.

Participants

The participants of this research were Community Assistants and Resident Advisors in training session with me as their instructor. The participants were not the focus of this research; the research was to improve my teaching skills using the synectics model. From August 2009 to January 2011 there was very little staff turnover with ten members resigning of a staff of 54 RA/CAs. The majority of the participants remained the same throughout this research.

Participant selection. The researcher and the RA/CAs who attended training sessions were the participants of this research. No compensation was offered for participating in this research. Participation was completely voluntary. For participants that chose to participate, they were asked to partake as they normally participate in training and/or in-service sessions and respond to the online surveys by Student Housing and Residential Life as they normally respond.

Community assistants and resident advisors. Community Assistant and Resident Advisors at California State University Monterey Bay are student leaders appointed and trained through the Department of Student Housing and Residential Life to serve as community leaders in on-campus housing. Community Assistants (CA) and Resident Advisors (RA) provide direct support to students to aide students in achieving personal, social, and academic goals. They are also responsible for promoting community development, which serves students in helping to develop skills essential to productive citizenry. These goals are achieved primarily through community development activities (Residential Life Mission Statement, 2010). RA/CAs build

community through being accessible to talk to students, planning, collaborating, and providing an array of social, educational, and recreational activities for students to attend, and encouraging resident interaction. Furthermore, all RA/CAs must serve as an effective role model and an interested and active member of the CSUMB community (Student Employment Opportunities, 2011). In general, the position averages 20 hours per week with times that have a work load that is below this minimum expectation and times of the year where the work load exceeds this average.

This basic description of the RA/CA role barely begins to describe their work. However, the new position description of the RA/CA provides a fuller view than most of what is entailed in the position (See Appendix B: [Resident Advisor Community Assistant Position Description](#)). The CA/RA roles and how they are interpreted has changed and grown even from the inception of this research. The newest job description defines the RA/CAs as student affairs educators. The job description describes the general and administrative responsibilities, community programming, on-call duty rotation, confidentiality, safety and security, trainings and meetings, composes seventy-seven separate responsibilities that must be adhered to and upheld at all times. It is a complex role with many responsibilities all centered on the residential learning community and student success (Student Employment Opportunities, 2011).

Community assistant versus resident advisor. The role and responsibilities of the Community Assistant and the Resident Advisor are essentially the same. For both roles the applicant must have at least one completed semester of on-campus living experience or other approved similar experience prior to the employment start date. Both must complete and successfully clear a Live Scan electronic fingerprinting background check. Both CAs and RAs must agree to fulfill all the aforementioned responsibilities of the role.

The differences between the two roles lie in the setting and demographic served and the requirements that must be fulfilled to live in the area served. Community Assistants serve the East Campus community. East Campus is three miles east of the Main Campus of California State University Monterey Bay and is composed of three apartment communities, Frederick Park I, II and Schoonover Park. Schoonover Park is faculty and educational partner housing and Frederick Park I and II are solely student housing. The Frederick Park I and II Apartments, spanning 11 streets and 430 apartments form a student residential community serving; students with families, graduate students, senior class level students, and students who are twenty-one years of age or older and who have a senior class status. The CAs serve a community separated from Main Campus and integrated with non-students where as the Resident Advisors serve a homogenous student population in residence halls directly in the heart of Main Campus.

Additionally all students, RA/CAs included, in East Campus or Main Campus must be enrolled with fulltime status, that is an undergraduate student must be enrolled in at least 12 units and a graduate student must be enrolled in at least 8 units. Furthermore, students must be making academic progress toward the completion of a degree (Student Employment Opportunities, 2011). That is they simply cannot take classes to fulfill the fulltime enrollment, it must be towards the fulfillment of a degree. However, even with this academic requirement the populations served are very different. In East Campus there is typically one student in the family household and the rest of the residents are non-students. The CA must extend community development activities to these community members as well. This is unique to East Campus and never encountered by RAs serving the pure student population on the Main Campus.

Procedures

The procedures for this action research involved applying the Synectics Instructional Model to Community Development Training and Instruction for Resident Advisors and Community Assistants at CSUMB. The procedures in place for this research sought to answer the question: How does my use of the Synectics Instructional Model effect my instruction of the Community Assistants and Resident Advisors?

There are three primary synectics models of instruction; the original (Prince, 1970) K-12 instruction (Gunter et al. 2007) and the corporate model (Mauzy & Harriman, 2003). In Fall Training 2009 I used the original model. In Winter Training 2010 I used the K-12 model. In fall 2010 and winter 2011 Trainings, I used a hybrid model that incorporated elements of all three synectics models. I also added steps of my own design, drawn from other teaching and learning models. It would seem to follow that this varied use of the synectics model would lead to research on which model was more effective. However, this was not the research question. All the synectics models have value. This research was not seeking to answer which model was best. This research was about a teacher-researcher learning to implement Synectics within specific contexts; teaching the concept of community development to a highly specialized group.

Original Synectics Model. Fall 2009. Gordon and Prince's first procedures of promoting creative learning sessions centered on a model dependent on a leader to facilitate sessions and lead the group through the process (Prince, 1970). Promoting Imaginative Speculation involves seven steps. 1) Identify and understand the problem. 2) Collect relevant information. 3) Mull it over. 4) Speculate 5) Develop ideas 6) Select the best idea 7) Implement it (Prince, p.13, 1970).

K-12 Synectics Model. In Winter Training 2010 I used the K-12 model. The K-12 synectics instructional model offers two versions; making the strange familiar and making the familiar strange (Gunter et al., 2007). For this research the version of making the strange familiar was selected. In this version the teacher leads students through analogies to see relationships between new and unfamiliar material and material with which they already have some information (Gunter et al., 2007). The steps in this synectics model were to: provide information, present the analogy, use personal analogy to create compressed conflicts, compare the compressed conflict with the subject, identify differences, re-examine the original subject, create new direct analogies and evaluate (Gunter et al., 2007).

Hybrid Synectics Model. In Fall 2010 Training I used a hybrid model that incorporated elements of all three synectics models. I also added steps of my own design, drawn from other teaching and learning models. A fully detailed description of what this hybrid model looked like, the activities it includes and the learning strategies used is in the Appendix (See Appendix D: [Hybrid Synectics Model as Implemented Fall 2010](#)).

Corporate Synectics Model. Winter 2011. Synectics, as it was developed for the corporate world, follows a similar pattern as the educational model, and however expands to a greater problem solving process than just concept development (Gordon, 1961; Prince, 1970). Over time these broad abstract theoretical procedures were further expanded and defined by succeeding researchers into a set of procedures of action (Mauzy & Harriman, 2003). In *Creativity Inc.: Building an Inventive Organization* (Mauzy & Harriman, 2003) the authors expanded synectics from abstract ideals to identifying four critical inter-related dynamics of creativity: Motivation, curiosity and fear, breaking and making connections and evaluation.

Mauzy & Harriman maintained, as did Gordon and Prince that creativity depends on a climate and a system in place needs to be in place which promotes innovation in the workplace (Gordon, 1961; Prince, 1970; Mauzy & Harriman, 2003). Mauzy & Harriman further delineated themes, steps and exercises to explore creativity that are replicable and adaptable within the dynamics of creativity that the whole group can go through together to explore creativity in the workplace. The steps for exploring innovation and creativity for this model and other synectics models can be seen in Table 1: Comparison Chart of Synectics Instructional Models.

Table 1: Comparison Chart of Synectics Instructional Models

TABLE 1

Comparison Chart of Synectics Instructional Models

Version	Original	Corporate	K-12
Title	Promoting Imaginative Speculation	Creative Thinking Theme	Making the Strange Familiar
Action Steps	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify and understand the problem 2. Collect relevant information 3. Mull it over 4. Speculate 5. Develop ideas 6. Select the best idea 7. Implement it <p>(Prince, p.13, 1970)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dispel misconceptions about creativity 2. Learn how creativity works and practice it 3. Recognize barriers and fears 4. Breaking and making connections 5. Evaluation <p>(Mauzy & Harriman, 2003)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide information 2. Present analogy 3. Identify personal analogy to create compressed conflicts 4. Compare the compressed conflict with the subject 5. Identify differences 6. Re-examine original subject 7. Create new direct analogies 8. Evaluate <p>(Gunter, et al. 2007, p.154)</p>
Purpose	Promote imaginative speculation. Identify obstacles to creativity.	Identified strategies and suggested exercises to promote creativity in the workplace that are replicable and adaptable.	Adapted from Gordon and Prince for K-12 settings to explore the basics of a concept to create new insight.
Audience	Corporate settings and invention sessions	Corporate and innovative work environments	K-12 learning environments

Data Collection

This action research employed three primary qualitative data collection methods; online surveys, focus groups and a researchers' journal log, to investigate the effects of synectics to reconstruct community development training for RA/CAs at CSUMB. Data was collected four times over the span of eighteen months; Fall 2009 Training, Fall 2010 Training, Winter 2010 Training and Winter 2011 Training. Within these four data collection intervals, the data collection methods were utilized to capture data in three stages: 1) Pre-training 2) during implementation of training and 3) Post training.

Data collection intervals followed the year round training schedule in place by Student Housing and Residential Life to train Resident Advisors and Community Assistants. Student Housing and Residential Life already had a post-training online survey system in place with data dating back 2007. Permission was requested and granted to use this data for this research to provide baseline data and served as a data collection opportunity after the implementation of community development training utilizing the synectics model.

Four community development trainings over the span of eighteen months was selected in which the teacher-researcher provided instruction using the synectics instructional model. These four times were during; Fall 2009 Training, Fall 2010 Training, Winter 2010 Training and Winter 2011 Training. There were many more days of training that were offered and many more days in which the teacher-researcher provided instruction and not selected for this research as they were not relevant to answering the research question or the teacher-researcher did not provide instruction on those training days.

Surveys. Surveys were distributed and collected online via email using the web-based survey provider, SurveyMonkey. SurveyMonkey is the world's leading provider of web-based

surveys which is used by millions of companies, academic institutions, organizations and individuals alike worldwide (SurveyMonkey Brand Perception Survey, October 2009). The California State University Monterey Bay, Student Housing and Residential Life SurveyMonkey account was used to distribute, collect and visually graph data. Each survey was generated by Student Housing and Residential Life professional staff, using a password protected account. Each survey was created exclusively for each day of training that contained questions which reflected the training experiences and learning outcomes for the training day being evaluated by the survey. As the teacher-researcher I did not directly create these surveys, however I was able to request questions be added to the surveys to collect data relevant to this research.

The post-training surveys were sent electronically via email to the training participants. The email contained a web address that was hyperlinked to direct the participant to the web-based security encrypted survey through SurveyMonkey. The emails in this research were sent using a service by SurveyMonkey on behalf of Student Housing and Residential Life. Each user creates a list of email addresses that is stored on their system. However, per the service agreement the email addresses stored by each user are not used by SurveyMonkey in any other way. The emails sent on a user's behalf appear to come from that user's email address.

Privacy and security using online systems are of high importance and were considered in the use of online surveys in this research. Survey questions, responses and results were kept in strict confidence and used in compliance with legal requirements. Survey responses were anonymized, that is IP addresses, email addresses, names, nor any other identifying information that could link responses back to the participant were intentionally not collected or recorded. This was possible using advanced technology settings for Internet privacy and security

commercially available today available through SruveyMonkey (SurveyMonkey, 2010). This included the use of Secure Sockets Layer encryption technology which protects user information using both server authentication and data encryption, ensuring that user data is safe, secure, and available only to authorized persons (2010). SurveyMonkey is also PCI DSS compliant, which is a comprehensive standard in place to help organizations proactively protect customer account data. PCI DSS is a multifaceted security standard that includes requirements for security management, policies, procedures, network architecture, software design and other critical protective measures (PCI-DSS, 2010).

Due to these security measures data could only be exported using the password protected users account. Therefore, the CSUMB account was used to export and publish data from the surveys. Original survey questionnaires were downloaded into printable PDF formats. The aggregated data results were downloaded into excel spreadsheets from the SurveyMonkey server. The results are summarized and provided in detailed format in the findings section.

Journal log. I used a journal to record teacher notes, observations, anecdotes, lesson plans, the outcome of learning strategies used and my own reflective writings. The journals served as tool for my own met cognizing and engagement in synectic thinking. The journal log was provided a record what was planned and what actually happened in training sessions. This was useful in monitoring instructional adjustments and the efficacy of learning strategies used.

Journal writing is a beneficial tool to enhance reflection, facilitate critical thought, express feelings, and write focused arguments (Walker, 2006). Journal writing can assist to bridge the gap between classroom and theoretical knowledge through ongoing reflection of actions and knowledge. Journaling is used as tool to reshape actions. Journaling is a tool for critical reflection on what happens in the teaching setting and considering a better way to

respond. Therefore, when the same or similar situation arises, I have may respond differently and hopefully more efficiently than when previously faced with a situation.

Focus groups feedback. Focuses groups provided feedback that may have not have made its way onto the online surveys. It was acknowledged that some people do not like to complete surveys, or if they do complete the survey they may not provide incomplete information as they are more concerned with getting the task done, or do not trust that their responses are anonymous. The focus group feedback meetings were held at the end of staff meetings or during training and development committee meetings. The focus group meetings were informal and optional. They were held in the weeks following each training session. There was not a time limit provided for representatives to come forward or share. To get at the thick description (Geertz, 1973) which gave participants multiple opportunities to share and the time needed to critically reflect the training experience. There were RA/CA s who acted as ambassadors for their prospective staffs, as well as being open to any individual act on their own to come forward and share. These individuals brought forward suggestions for improvement and provided valuable information on the affect of the group, which educational topics were perceived as the most useful, which learning strategies were successful or at least preferred by the group and often guided which topics should be covered next.

Decision Making

For the purposes of this research data collection methods were used which could provide ongoing feedback to the learners and the teacher-researcher for a greater understanding of which strategies were useful and which were not. Common methods to examine teaching and learning effectiveness involve learning goals and objectives, testing and grading, and using student feedback (Teaching Effectiveness Program, 2009). Testing and grading did not apply to this

research therefore learning goals, objectives, and student feedback served as ways to assess what was working and what needed adjustment. Decisions were made based on the data collected by the teacher-researcher and the feedback received from the learners.

Taken together as a whole, the data collection methods informed decision making about instruction. This was a critical pedagogical process of teaching and learning. Critical pedagogy enables teachers to see those influences on teaching and learning more clearly and articulate them in order to take action in our real world when necessary (Wink, 2005). Where critical pedagogy identifies, encourages critical reflection and calls for action (Freire, 1973/2009; Wink, 2005) synectic thinking similarly refers to material, encourages awareness and reflection to critically reconstruct teaching or learning experiences, then mentally disassemble and assemble the information to make new meanings in order to take action (Roukes, 1988). This critical pedagogy and synectics thinking informed instructional adjustments throughout the research and aided in data analysis.

Data Analysis Framework

Analyzing the qualitative data was a complex process that consisted of multiple iterative, progressive and recursive steps creating a holographic process (Siedel, 1998). It was iterative as it was a repeating cycle and it was progressive as it was a cycle that moved the process forward. Even in moving forward there was a returning back to the previously viewed data, which initiated recursive process. This recursive process looked back at the data as more information was gained during the data analysis, as the new information caused the researcher to think about the data differently and therefore new themes, relationships and impressions were made. This recursive process continually called the researcher back to previous parts of the data for further examination. It was ultimately a holographic process in that each step in the process contained

the entire process. For example, when the researcher first noticed things then the researcher was already mentally collecting and thinking about the data (Siedel, 1998).

This data analysis process included collecting, analyzing, noticing and reexamining to notice new things to be collected and analyzed, noticed and so on and so forth. Specifically the holographic data analysis process for this research included eleven identifiable steps.

1. Collecting and reviewing all the data sets; online survey responses, field notes from the journal log and ambassador/focus group feedback meetings.
2. Read through all the data to get a first impression, as an ethnographer would with field notes after a day in the field observing, then like an ethnographer, I wrote up those first impressions.
3. Data reduction. This was a process narrowed the data to be examined by eliminating data that did not help to answer the research question.
4. Analyzing the remaining data sets and looked for the pre-determined codes
5. Re-analyzed the data sets and looked for undetermined codes by noticing recurrent patterns that were emerging.
6. Categorized and organized data by predetermined codes and emergent patterns.
7. Analyzed the data sets again and looked for relationships between the predetermined and newly identified codes. Identified emerging themes.
8. Re-read through the data sets again with the identified codes, themes and perceived relationships and then I wrote up impressions of what I thought this data meant again, as they were field notes.
9. Reviewed all data sets, even those data sets previously eliminated as not answering the research question and reexamined that if now taken as a whole

any previously eliminated data could be re categorized as useful. If any data was identified as useful, it recoded appropriately. If it remained un-useful it maintained its status as not useful data.

10. Re-examine the data that was identified as not useful in answering the research question and examine it to see what information it provided. This step looked for outliers, and identified questions and suggestions emerged in this data set.
11. Identify key findings and write up impressions.
12. Apply Synectics for further analysis and interpretations:
 - a. Review key findings and key data sets
 - b. Identify key findings and data sets to be used to create analogies for
 - c. Create analogies of identified content
 - d. Identity compressed conflicts within data
 - e. Compare the compressed conflicts
 - f. Identify differences and similarities
 - g. Re-examine data, analogies and compressed conflicts
 - h. Create interpretations of data
 - i. Further evaluate and discuss, implications, applications and recommendations

Data Analysis Process

As described here, organizing data is a complex process. In the end I laid all the data I had before me on tables, on the walls and on bulletins boards. I sorted the online surveys, notes, focus groups notes and the teacher -journal entries by the corresponding training. I looked at the data as whole to learn what the major findings of this research were I reflected on the research question, my theoretical framework and the synectics model to identify themes and codes.

I coded all the data sets for the predetermined codes referring to the six principles of community; educationally purposeful, open, just, disciplined, caring, and celebrative (CFAT, 1990). I found they only applied to the Fall 2010 training. I looked for the undetermined codes in the patterns in the data through a process of sorting and sifting through the data sets, searching for types, processes, patterns or wholes to assemble or reconstruct the data in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion (Jorgensen, 1989). I identified four themes to explore: continuity and duration, educational content, learning strategies and synectic thinking.

With the data coded I laid it all out again. I created bar and pie charts to represent the data visually. I used Excel, Microsoft word and manual bar charts made from post it notes on a bulletin board to help me see how the codes were represented in each data set for Fall 2009, Winter 2010, Fall 2010 and Winter 2011. I then looked at the data, the codes and themes and the patterns in which they were emerging to gain a greater understanding of what this research meant.

Lastly, I applied the synectics model to the data analysis. Coding was the fundamental means of to categorizing discrete events, statements, and observations in the data (Charmaz, 1983). I applied synectics to invoke a creative process of discovering unifying themes in seemingly disconnected parts (Gordon, 1961; Prince, 1970; Gunter et al., 2007; Mauzy & Harriman, 2003). By following synectics I was able to identify key data sets to be used to create analogies for. I used the synectics worksheet (See Appendix C: [Making the Strange Familiar](#)). I created analogies for the research experience and identified compressed conflicts within data. From there I continued to look for differences and similarities, re-examine the data, analogies and compressed conflicts to create interpretations of data.

Chapter Four: Findings

I conducted this study of applied Synectics within a Social Reconstruction Framework to answer the research question; how did the use of Synectics affect my teaching of community development to the Community Assistants and Residents Advisors? This study took place in community development training for Resident Advisor/Community Assistant training at California State University Monterey Bay at the beginning of each semester from August 2009 through January 2011. I collected data through online surveys and focus groups after each of the four training sessions provided. I also utilized used a teacher reflection journal to record my observations, information from the focus groups and reflections of my teaching experiences. This chapter illustrates the “thick description” (Geertz, 1973, p.28) of those teaching experiences.

Findings

- Finding #1: The Synectics models helped to teach concept development, promoted creative and synectic thinking, and informed curriculum decision making.
- Finding #2: Providing Students with multiple and varied learning experiences was beneficial to their understanding of community development.
- Finding #3: The process of un-learning is often resisted yet once new connections are accepted learning abounds.

These findings are presented as they related to each of the four community development trainings.

The Synectics instructional models were designed to teach unfamiliar concepts and promote creative and synectic thinking. Throughout the course of this research I tried versions of Synectics each time I taught community development training sessions as I received

feedback on what was working and not working. I thought it was possible that since the models were created for different audiences that it may be a matter of finding the right version for this group.

The various Synectics models, the original model (Gordon, 1961; Prince 1970), K-12 model, Gunter et al, 2007, the corporate model, Mauzy & Harriman, 2003,, and the hybrid model created by combining all three models, all promoted concept development, creative and synectic thinking, and informed curriculum decision making. Each model did yield very different student responses. In the end what affected Synectics the most was my teaching and learning. I progressively reflected and acted on what was working well and what needed improvement. I used my journal reflections, and participants' feedback to answer the research question and to support the findings. Below I discuss how each of these played out.

Finding #1: Synectics models helped to teach concept development, promoted creative and synectic thinking, and informed curriculum decision making

This section describes separately how Synectics was used to apply each of these sub-findings: concept development, creative and synectic thinking, and curriculum decision making.

Concept Development. The trainings provided evidence that concept development of community increased over time. In fall 2009 only four of the sixty participants demonstrated an understanding of community development. The Fall Training focus group uncovered the misconceptions participants held about community development in living and learning communities. The focus group reported this conclusion:

Community development is usually clean-up days, or community gardens. It involves once in a while events. This is a really different idea than what you are talking about.

What you are saying sounds like a lot of work. You tell us its something we are already

doing. But how? And when? Is community development just like programming or is it something else?

This feedback was very valuable because it let me know that RA/CAs in this particular group had preconceived notions regarding the definition of community development was and was not. I had challenged those ideas and now RA/CAs were questioning their knowledge.

For Winter Training 2010 I recognized further evidence that RA/CAs were questioning their knowledge. I focused opportunities to explore the unknown through analogies to build their knowledge of community development. Despite this focus, the concept of community development remained unclear for the majority of the group.

Survey respondents replied, "I don't think there was one important thing that I learned in this session." And, "The community development training was certainly better. But, it is still a bit unclear."

Others were beginning to grasp the supporting structures of community development. When asked to report on the most important element they learned, their responses reflected a specific concept of community development. Such as, "I learned different ways to market programs and still be sensitive to the diverse needs of students with identified as well as unidentified disabilities."

One respondent showed an understanding that each community is unique and that there are infinite ways to engage in community development in remarking "I understand now that community development is a process and there is not one exact definition. It's a flexible definition which supports the vision of what each community is intended to be." Others were beginning to trust their knowledge. "The most important thing that I learned was to trust what I know about community development to meet the needs of my residents."

By the third training in fall 2010 the majority of the participants demonstrated they understood community development they were able to identify actions they would take to build a sense of community in the living and learning communities they served. All of the survey participants who completed the survey believed their that hey understood their role in developing community, as confirmed in the Fall 2010 Survey Responses (See: Table 2).

Table 2: Fall 2010 Survey Responses

Fall 2010 Training Wednesday, 11 August		
I understand my role as an RA/CA in terms of developing community within campus housing.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Agree	100%	28
Disagree	0.0%	0
Skipped Question	0.0%	0
	answered question	28
	Total Respondents	28

The majority of the RA/CA staff continued on from the previous year. This meant that most of the participants had been to the previous two community development trainings. There were approximately ten new staff members out of a total of 60. Quantitative data showed that all 28 survey respondents of the 50 that attended training felt they understood community development. Of those 28 responses, 18 provided a detailed description in their own words of what they learned about community development.

A Fall Training 2010 commentary response was inclusive of many central ideas taught shared:

An ideal community that I want to develop is one where the residents feel safe and comfortable to live in. I want to create an environment where people are not afraid to help each other or ask each other for help and shows respect for their surroundings and each other. It needs to have the feeling of a home away from home. Everyone is

accepted no matter their differences. Ideally it will be a place to grow personally as residents test out ideas and behaviors in a safe setting with our support. They will also have their needs met academically, socially, emotionally and leave when they are ready and have achieved their goals. A successful community has people that support one another and in the end initial goals will be exceeded.

The community development curriculum I had created had been approved and published in the RA/CA Training Manual for Fall Training 2010. This provided text to follow along with and was made available to all participants. The focus group shared that the new curriculum with the synectics model cemented concept development for many returning participants. This statement from the survey communicates the overall sentiment of the focus group:

Compared to Winter Training 2010 this one was much better. You did a really good job simplifying the material and activities. Things were less technical. The handouts, the training manual, and the activities really were applicable and made the subject of community development clear and understandable. I see that programming is a powerful tool for building community, and even the little things I do help build community. I get it, I totally get it now!

Another survey response illustrated that concept development was occurring for participants, “I wasn't focused too much on acknowledging the accomplishments of others so much. But now that it has been brought up as a very important aspect of building relationships and community, I will do this more.”

While the training made an effort to be applicable to all learning levels, there were still participants who reported they did not understand specific elements of community development. For instance, one survey respondent remarked, “I do not understand what was meant about

recognizing residents. I don't know if it meant just knowing their names or something else. That was not very clear to me."

It is possible that those who were still unclear on the concept were new staff members. The focus groups corroborated that new staff struggled with the concept of community development. Returning staff in the focus group also expressed confidence in their new-found understanding of community development and willingness to support new staff. One comment made was, "They'll get it. It takes time. We eventually did. Besides we are all here to support each other."

In summary, the Synectics models helped to teach concept development. It was effective in helping the participants take an unfamiliar concept and build their understanding of that concept. As the survey responses supported, it took time for the RA/CAs to develop their understanding of community development. Once the participants did understand the concept, they had confidence in their ability to support others learning the concept. This research showed that synectics affected many levels of instruction.

Creative and Synectic Thinking. Synectic thinking refers to the process of being aware of one's thinking and how one learns to apply it to solve problems, create new meanings and make a commitment to applying the newly constructed knowledge through a course of action. Creative thinking focuses on exploring ideas, generating possibilities, looking for many right answers rather than just one, or imagining or inventing something new. It can be just for fun or used as a problem solving technique. Synectics is designed to promote these kinds of thinking and they were promoted in the activities. The defining difference between Synectics and creative thinking training is that synectic thinking training in this research resulted in a course of action while creative thinking activities tend to simply offer practice in being creative.

In Fall Training 2010, there was a greater focus on activities that engaged creative and synectic thinking. I planned many cooperative and constructivist learning activities that helped me, as the teacher, to recognize what they were learning. Community goal writing activities showed that some participants recognized creativity as a tool to build community. Typical goals from respondents were, “My goal is to get my community involved in as many activities as soon as possible to build a strong community,” “Create a central theme for my community and maintain the theme for the entire semester for continuity,” “I want to get my residents involved in creative and fun activities together to build community.”

Survey responses abounded with synectic thinking comments. A detailed survey response that illustrates this was:

This was a very good session. Even as returner I found myself taking notes, and really interested in the community development information and activities. It was a lot of information that was put together very well. It inspired me to take community development even more seriously, not that I didn't before, just I have a renewed passion for it. This training gave me new tools to use. I am going to use the theory to help me understand and build community.

Another particularly good example was:

When it got to the part of writing an action plan, most of the time people just set it aside, I do too. But this time I wanted to write my action plan because I had new ideas for my community that I wanted to incorporate. I learned a lot of new skills and got new ideas for my community. I am very excited to do them. Really good job. Nice presentation. This training gave time and support to really think about communities and make plans.

The synectics model was designed to promote creativity and innovation. The action plans written by participants applied the Synectics model. It served as a tool for reflection increasing thoughts into action and affecting the community development training of the RA/CAs.

Curriculum Decision Making. As the research continued I learned more about the Synectics model and the participants. After the first use of synectics I suspected that Synectics could effectively guide curriculum decision making. In Winter Training 2010, the K-12 Synectics model was used as a guide to organize the curriculum content. I immediately recognized the advantage of having a format to follow. I worked with the Training and Development Committee to align the training content with the Synectics instructional model (See Appendix H: Synectics Framework for Training Scheduling). Synectics aided in deciding which content to provide and when. An entire day of training was eliminated by using the synectics model to condense and organize training content.

Winter 2010 survey feedback confirmed that the majority of the participants who completed the survey, 14 out of 16 respondents, were pleased with the organization of training. The following comment sums up the sentiment of the positive survey data received,

I was really happy about how well training went. It was easy going, very interesting and not as drawn out. I felt that the three days covered everything without dragging on and was still enough time together that allowed for us to reconnect. Everyone got along well and supported one another. The timing, the content, and the games were well planned and that was so great to see.

Two of the 16 survey respondents rated the training as unsatisfactory. However, their comments indicated that the training had improved. "All in all, I feel that the training was a lot

better than the past four that I've seen. I really enjoyed the quests. Great presentations. I felt more involved this year.”

The use of the Synectics model was effective in organizing the training content and sessions, allowing me to reduce training from four to three days. As for the length of training, even though we had streamlined a four day schedule into three days, there were still those who felt that training was too long. The focus group suggested it be trimmed to two days. Admittedly, the focus group participants commented. “No one felt bored or complained about things dragging on.” However, returning staff members had concerns about the length for their involvement. A returning staff member commented, “I feel that the whole training was too lengthy especially for returners.” Another returning staff member though, disagreed, stating, “Even one hour is too long for someone who does not want to be there.” Lack of desire to be at training was an obstacle to deeper learning.

A survey respondent confirmed synectics effect on curriculum in this response, “I really liked the format of this training and have enjoyed being able to have training in such a condensed format. Training was very smooth today. It seemed well planned and executed.” Additionally, the needs of the individual were considered in the training schedule. The focus group valued the effort put into the scheduling. This statement captured the sentiment of the focus group:

The design has really improved. The training committee has done a really good job. And has really considered the RA/CAs in the scheduling. For example, there is time for me as a student to take care of what I need to do before school starts. We have a three hour break for personal time and that has never happened before. And instead of listening to a

speaker talk about chlamydia for an hour, now we have an hour of self-care with Yoga!

This schedule is improved greatly from previous years. We applaud your efforts!

Then everyone did applaud!

Fall Training 2010 was well received with strong evidence that the Synectics model in concert with curriculum, multiple opportunities and varied learning strategies taught the concept of community development. The focus group shared that the games and activities helped them to feel involved and connected. Synectics informed curriculum decision making. The training content was plugged into the steps of the model (See Appendix E: [Synectic as Framework for Training Scheduling](#)). This had the effect of condensing training sessions and simplifying schedules. All of the information was covered in less time and more efficiently. The Synectics models also suggested the use of more learning strategies and were well received. As a result, I chose to use more learning strategies.

Finding #2: Providing Students with multiple and varied learning experiences was beneficial to their understanding of community development

In the past, I had experienced that telling the RA/CA trainees about community development did not work and that letting them try to decipher their own meanings using synectics was not successful for all. During each academic year, I provided an average of two in-services to the RA/CA staff. This helped me to learn about their learning styles and training needs. It also gave me opportunities to practice my teaching. I also observed that using learning strategies made learning more engaging for the participants. In the third training provided in fall 2010, I combined elements all of the Synectics models. In doing so, I created a hybrid model. This hybrid model employed 21 identifiable constructivist and cooperative learning strategies (See Appendix D: [Hybrid Synectics Model as Implemented Fall 2010](#)).

This research utilized multiple opportunities and a variety of learning experiences that helped participants construct their knowledge of community development. This section discusses a few learning strategies that were significant to this research.

Creative Quests. The creative quests were a learning strategy used to offer more opportunities to understand community development. Energizers and ice breakers are common in training to break up the monotony of sessions and build relationships among staff members. Instead of playing random games, creative quests were fashioned to combine the fun of energizers with familiar folktales to communicate community development values. One example of a creative quest, was one I led called, *Little Red Hen makes Strawberry Shortcakes*. Each area staff was a team against the other area staff teams. This creative quest used the story the Little Red Hen to teach the value of team work. Each team had to go through all the steps one at a time, to make the strawberry shortcakes. This activity was inspired by Emile Durkheim's mechanical solidarity with an emphasis on building communities through common beliefs and sentiments (1933/1987). All team members did the same activity at the same time. For example all the team members opened the packaged shortcakes and put them on the tray. A judge was at each station to ensure people did not move ahead and that all the team members were involved. The participants cheered in excitement as they participated in the. After the game everyone ate their strawberry shortcakes.

Survey comments supported the creative quests had added an element of fun and creativity to learning. Survey responses supported this claim, "I liked the fun feel of the day. The last challenge of the day with strawberry short-cakes was a lot of fun. I liked working as a team and I would like to do that one again." "I really enjoyed the quests; they helped me to feel more involved. They gave me ideas of how to help my residents to be involved and have fun

together.” “This was the best training we had! The quests were fun and can easily be done with our residents to build community.”

Setting the tone for learning. Setting a respectful tone for learning and establish clear expectations at the start of each session was an important factor. I observed that when I involved the participants in group rule setting their behavior improved. When we discussed and established together what respectful behaviors look like, participants were more likely to follow the rules they set. Moreover, they held one another accountable for disruptive behaviors and were more on task. In contrast, when I did not take the time to establish behavior expectations the training started off on the wrong foot and was plagued with disruptive behaviors.

In a session that was unsuccessful in setting the tone for learning received this survey feedback:

I can't focus on what presenters are saying in a room full of people who don't have a clear idea of what is acceptable behavior during the session. It would have really helped me if the presenters were more effective at communicating what behavior they expected from their audience.

In a session that was successful in setting the tone for learning received this survey feedback:

All of the activities were really clearly explained and helped me to understand what I needed to do. It was also helpful that we have been working on this topic for a few trainings. You think you get it, but then you learn more.

In short, the importance of establishing behavior expectations is that the disruptive behavior of a few affects the learning of many. Therefore, to be successful in setting the tone for learning it is important to slow down and review behavior expectations as a group.

Promoting self-propelled learners. Training is intended to teach the participants to engage in critical reflection for community development and action. This is dependent on the

RA/CAs becoming self-propelled learners, who can take the information they are provided, critically reflect on it and adjust their learning to engage in new action (Kozulin, Gindis, Ageyev, & Miller, 2003). I proposed each RA/CA take charge of their own learning and presented them with a challenge. I asked returning staff to role model and help new staff and to be open to deepening their understanding of community development. I asked new staff to use what they already know to create new meanings of community development for the RA/CA role. I validated the work of the RA/CAs and offered encouragement to empower their learning. I wanted to show that I valued their work, recognized that they came into this training session with a wealth of knowledge, experiences and information.

Evidence that these strategies were effective emerged in the survey data. One survey response stated, "I felt validated. I learned to appreciate how knowledgeable and capable RA/CAs are. I also learned that this group has great ideas." Another stated, "As a returner, I was really surprised at how well training met my needs and gave me real work-time. The challenge to learn something new made me think differently about things." The focus group shared that "By giving us a challenge for training it gave us an active role."

Teaching and leading by example. Leading by example was effective to teach goal setting. One example of when this strategy was particularly effective was in goal setting. I ensured that learning outcomes were written in the way that I was teaching them to write goals. The students were asked to develop goals for their communities. The learning outcomes written on their schedules provided models of how to write goals. The department of Student Housing & Residential Life follows a goal setting format called S.M.A.R.T goals. This format was followed in the goal setting session. Goals are written to be: Specific, Measurable, Attainable,

Realistic, and Time Bound. Throughout the goal setting process I strived to provide clear directions and be flexible yet firm when needed to keep students on task.

Survey feedback supported the effectiveness of this. “Christina was flexible to the group’s learning level. She spent more time on some subjects when needed and moved faster through other stuff that RA/CAs already knew or showed that they understood.” “I really liked how clear goal setting was taught.” Another comment, “Christina did a good job keeping energy and enthusiasm up for a three hour session especially for a topic as complicated as community development. The different games and activities really helped me learn.”

Scenarios. Teaching how to use group development theory (Tuckman, 1965) with the strategy of simulations and scenarios helped connect abstract material, “Using real scenarios from CSUMB worked well to help understand community development.” Another participant was able to recall the stages of group development theory presented, “The most important thing I learned was about the forming, storming, norming, performing and mourning.”

Changing the groups people were assigned to was useful to help them build relationships with other staff members and to learn from one another. This survey response supports that this was an effective strategy for at least for one new staff member:

“I enjoyed getting in our committees to answer questions on building community. It was helpful and fun. I also really appreciated the one on one with an experienced staff member. Talking about their experiences really helped me as a new RA. Thank you!”

Journaling. Journaling received the greatest disparity in the survey feedback. There were responses like, “Journaling is waste of time.” There were also requests for more journaling, “I like the journals and would like to get them again in training.” In Winter Training 2010 the Training and Development Committee accepted and implemented my idea add

structured reflection time and creative activities. As a result, all the participants were given journals, art supplies and time to create. One survey response requested, “I like the journals and would like to get them again. Can we have more time to do more artsy stuff next time? It was fun decorating and writing the journals.” It is notable that the journals were not collected. The journals and art supplies were provided to foster creativity and synectic thinking.

A summative statement from the focus group about learning strategies was:

When sessions offered practical applications it made training worthwhile. For example the action plans and the community goal setting need to get done but the semester gets started and they don't get done. Doing them in training was a helpful activity and a good use of time. The scenarios based on real examples from our communities helped to learn to use theory. All of these activities really helped to learn about community development on-campus.

The surveys, focus groups and teacher-researcher journal supported providing students with multiple and varied learning experiences was beneficial to helping them build a greater understanding of community development. This finding supported that constructivist and cooperative learning strategies engaged students with the material in multiple ways. A variety of learning strategies supports students with multiple modalities of learning (Gardner, 1983), was sensitive to diverse learners (Nieto, 1994 and 1996; Ladson-Billings, 1994 and 1995) and had the effect of making content more accessible to students.

Finding #3: The process of un-learning is often resisted yet once new ideas are accepted learning begins

Breaking and making connections is critical to the Synectic learning process. The creators of Synectics identified major barriers which hindered the development of a stimulating workplace. Many of the elements that obstructed creativity and new learning in the workplace

were also experienced in the training sessions. Behaviors which obstructed creativity and new learning included; not listening, lack of respect or trust to share new ideas, fear of failure, low energy or motivation, and not referring to experts in the field for advice (Prince, 1970). While I was aware of these behaviors, I did not expect how challenging it was going to be to lead learners through the process of un-learning and connecting with new information. In retrospect, it seems naïve that I did not expect to encounter these kinds of behaviors. Of most interest to this research was when I encountered and personally experienced these types of behaviors.

The most resistance to learning was encountered when I presented new ideas, information or activities designed to dispel misconceptions, recognize barriers and fears, and break or make connections. The pattern of resistance seemed to follow the group development theory (Tuckman, 1965) I was teaching as a theoretical lens for community development (See Appendix A: Theoretical Lens for ongoing community development). Being able to assess where the group or individuals are developmentally was a valuable tool. This theory proved highly beneficial to interpret the actions of the training participants and guided my responses.

The stages of group development are forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning/mourning. The behaviors of the participants were easily classified within these stages. The behaviors identified in synectics to obstruct learning were the most prevalent when the group lapsed into a storming stage. The narrative of the progress through these stages follows here.

Stage 1: Forming. In Fall Training 2009 the group was in the forming stage. The participants were positive and polite. The survey responses were sparse and it was difficult to discover what they knew about community development and how they felt about training. As this stage is typically fairly short, within a few weeks the focus groups members came forward

with comments such as “Training, not just community development training was boring.” And as was stated earlier, they did not see how community development related to their jobs. This is typical of the forming stage, where members do not yet see the value of community.

Stage 2: Storming. In Winter Trainings 2010 and 2011 the group had members in the forming stage that were new hires. Most returning staff were in the storming stage and a few had progressed to norming. As in classic storming behavior, participants questioned the value of community development training. In my teacher-researcher journal I recorded that during the training, many participants resisted taking or staying on task in both Winter Training sessions.

In Winter Training 2010, I had recorded in my teacher-researcher journal the particular challenges faced as participants resisted learning and how I responded as the teacher. The students were off-task, talking over one another, and generally not giving attention to the learning at hand. As the teacher, I was struggling to get the group through the training material and to complete the assignments. I responded by adding learning strategies, such as think-pair-share.

Think-pair-share was selected because it met the needs of the group and the teacher. It met the needs of people who wanted to continue talking and met the needs of the teacher to keep people thinking and working on topic. Furthermore, it divided the group up into smaller more manageable group sizes. This strategy was effective in refocusing the group. They completed their personal analogies and compressed conflicts.

However, in line with group development theory, the group’s attention to learning did not last. Storming behavior took hold in full force, near the end of the session. During a reflection activity, soft music was played to set a peaceful atmosphere. The group was not settling into the activity. I called out directions over people conversing. Unexpectedly the music

was changed by a professional staff member. The song “*Eye of the Tiger*” blared loudly in the middle of the journaling activity. The participants cheered. The reflection activity was clearly over.

Due to group development theory as a supporting theoretical framework for this research, I was able to recognize that the group was in the storming stage and responded accordingly. I acknowledged they did not want to have quiet reflection and asked that they harness their reflection ideas into an art activity. I brought out art supplies and extended the time for collage art.

The storming stage informs that this is when most groups fail and authority is challenged. Instead of becoming angry, I accepted it for what it was and tried to focus on the task at hand. Theory also guides that this is a difficult stage for leaders/teachers because they do not have the support of established processes or strong enough relationships with others to help them effect change.

Knowing the theory was not always enough to keep the group together or keep teaching and learning happening. In Winter Training 2011, I recorded in my teacher-researcher being affronted with even stronger storming behaviors and how entirely different my response was compared to the year before when the group was in this stage. I knew realistically and theoretically that the storming phase suffers from inconsistent support and authority is challenged. I expected this from my peers but I did not expect it from supervisors. Winter Training 2011 started without establishing behavior expectations and presenters failed to show up. The Training and Development Committee and professional staff tried to fill in for the absent presenters but were simply not prepared or equipped to do so. There were long periods of waiting. During this time the group carried on with their own agendas of talking, working on

other projects, getting snacks. The training committee and staff tried to contact presenters and ultimately chose to fill in the best they could. These mishaps combined with a group in the storming phase made teaching nearly impossible.

By the time I taught my session, the group had heightened to an unmanageable state. I was at a complete an utter loss to get the attention of the group. A professional staff member, in raised voice, called for attention and respectful behavior. The group briefly complied. In this moment of compliance I gave the group the directions for the Walk and Talk activity. Before I could even finish explaining the brief directions of the activity the talking and off-task behaviors resumed. These behaviors were happening in the presence of professional staff members. I looked to the professional staff for support, which were either absent from the training or also disengaged. I tried again to lead the group and re-direct their behaviors. I decided to move forward and re-start the learning activity. I hoped to regain order.

What resulted was beyond belief. The stress balls that were given as token gifts were being thrown about, there was loud cross-talk, side projects, people getting snacks and walking about the room. Participants were also using laptops, phones and ipods. I felt completely unsupported and disempowered. I did not feel that it was fair for professional staff to expect me or any other peer presenter to address such extremely disruptive behavior. In fairness to the supervisors, they likely felt as powerless as I. I did the best I could under the storming circumstances. I added unplanned learning activities to keep learners engaged. I called for attention but the group remained disruptive. In all honesty, I felt apathetic and I just wanted the session to be over.

Surprisingly, survey data was richer in commentary than any of the previous training surveys. The responses were either tremendously positive or extremely negative. On the

positive side there were comments like: “I loved the winter training. I didn't feel stressed out at any moment and really felt that it met the needs of the current staff that we have.” And, “I really enjoyed getting to brainstorm with other RAs on ideas. This was the first time in three years that I didn't mind being at training. I was treated like an adult.”

On the negative side: “Be assertive and confident or no one is going to listen to what you have to say! Have a strong introduction and the frustration levels may decrease.” There were a few comments addressing the behaviors of the other RA/CAs. “I was honestly offended by the behaviors and comments of some RAs during training. It seemed that certain individuals felt they were above training. I don't think that there is ever training where I don't learn something new.”

The focus group and survey response reflected my feelings as a peer presenter. A survey respondent suggested, “The directors need to have a plan for when presenters are getting flack and make sure to follow up on it, with a conversation with the Community or Program Director about general respect and professional conduct.” The RA/CAs did not always respect my authority as a peer presenter and I needed support from professional staff to be successful. This was recognized by some of the participants as reflected in their survey comments.

Reflections from teacher-researcher journal provided evidence that I had to make more instructional adjustments in Winter Trainings. The circumstances which required those changes occurred under supports that the group was in the storming stage. These two anecdotes were exemplary to describe what storming behaviors looked like, how I responded as the teacher faced with these behaviors and the instructional adjustments used to accommodate for this group development stage.

Stage 3: Norming. When the group was in the stages of norming and performing they were easier to teach. In the norming stage groups come to respect the authority of the leader/teacher. Relationships are stronger. People are more likely to ask for help and it feels like progress is being made. The examples for this section are discussed with the performing stage.

Stage 4: Performing. In the performing stage groups are more willing to follow rules and encourage rule following of others. They help one another, seek to put forth their ideas and want to see their ideas plans through. Lapsing back into previous storming behaviors still occurs, but with less frequency. The role of the leader/teacher is stay objective, support relationship building and boundary setting. Once groups are in the performing stage collaborative projects can be accomplished. The performing stage is marked by less conflict and cooperation.

In the Winter Trainings, there were individuals who were in the norming and performing stages. There were staff members who remained on task and made an effort to be supportive. They offered me encouragement and spoke up about the disrespectful and distracting behaviors. The focus group revealed that the participants did not see their behaviors as negative or disruptive. They expressed feeling comfortable and viewed their actions as using training time to accomplish work-related projects. They also commented that the culture of Winter Training is about having fun.

After hearing this comment, I reflected and realized that Winter Training, in my experience had been more about having fun. In 2008 we did a ropes course. In 2009 we competed in teams to complete a scavenger hunt. Culture is a powerful force to overcome. Even with a theory and model to guide my actions it was a challenge to stay objective and follow the theory to support relationship building and boundary setting.

Overall Reflections

Change is difficult. Even though there was an instruction model in place, there were still difficulties. The biggest teaching errors involved a failure to establish relevance and not holding students accountable for their work. What this looked like in practice was teaching without establishing clear expectations of behavior and learning outcomes every time. The assumption that since I was working with adults that they would know how to behave in workshop or training sessions turned out to be false. I also spent little time writing out learning outcomes. I had the big idea of what I wanted to teach in each session but failed to break it in to smaller more manageable outcomes. As I gained more experience and knowledge, teaching errors greatly decreased. Table 3 shows how over time I made less instructional errors.

TABLE 3: Common Instructional First Time Teacher Errors Frequency Chart

Common Instructional Errors	Pre- Research	Fall 2009	Winter 2010	Fall 2010	Winter 2011
Call on volunteers	X	X		X	
Call on students cold	X				
Lecture or PowerPoint only	X				
Work without accountability	X	X	X		X
Fail to establish relevance	X		X		X
Long Exams, surveys or forms	X		X		
No instructional adjustments	X	X			
Teaching without clear learning outcomes	X	X	X		
Disrespect of students					

The self-assessment helped me to reflect on the growth I had experienced as teacher as a result of this research. I learned that before this research I relied on the transmission model. I had turned teaching into PowerPoint shows and failed to provide variety in my instructional methods. With training and practice I changed my teaching practices. I learned to use a range of constructivist and cooperative learning strategies to aid students to build their own knowledge

(See Table 4: Cooperative and constructivist learning strategies used). I learned to establish clear behavior expectations to improve everyone's learning experience. I learned to ensure that individual and groups were accountable for their learning by having them submit a product. I also learned to teach with confidence and maintain a teacher presence.

Table 4: Cooperative and Constructivist Learning Strategies Used

Constructivist and Cooperative Learning Strategies	First attempt: Transmission model	Second Attempt: K-12 model synectics	Third Attempt: Hybrid K-12 model and Corporate Model of Synectics	Fourth Attempt: Corporate Model Synectics
Analogies		X	X	X
Collage		X		
Jigsaw			X	
Journals		X	X	X
Learning Logs			X	
Read-A-Loud			X	
Questioning	X		X	X
Reflection Journals			X	X
Self-Assessment			X	
Simulations			X	X
Synectics			X	X
T-Charts			X	
Think-Pair-Share	X		X	
Turn and Talk		X	X	X

Synectics taught me to face fears, acknowledge barriers and be honest about failures. I attribute the success of this research to being honest about my failures and to persisting even when I was in the storming stage. Having faith in the theories and the Synectic models I selected for this research, helped me stay organized, inform decision making and guide learning activities. Being committed to the idea of community to improve education motivated me to persevere in the face of failure and rejection. Many factors worked in concert to help me to achieve success. However, the critical element of success for this research came down to

allowing Synectics to work in my own life. I had to undergo the difficult and often painful process of un-learning. This allowed me to connect with new thinking, learning and innovative action.

In summation, this action research presented several challenges for me as the researcher. I had to orienteer my way through unfamiliar literature, and keep track of what had been done. I had to use the data collection methods I had in place to provide feedback to inform direction and think under pressure to make wise decisions about what to do next. I had to make sure that I stayed on the path to follow the synectics instructional model and not loose sight of the direction of my research. I had to fulfill duties for training unrelated to my research and at times it was very difficult to separate my research from the goals of the department or training committee. In the end, I wanted to share what I learned so others might try the Synectics Instructional Models for themselves. To show the effect synectics had on instruction required a great deal of organization so that findings could be interpreted.

Chapter Five: Discussion

This action research was designed to answer the question: How does my use of the Synectics Instructional Model affect my instruction of the Community Assistants and Resident Advisors? This research was driven by a personal desire to understand community development and a need to fulfill departmental obligations as the trainer. This action research had three major findings: 1) the model of instruction matters, 2) learning strategies improved satisfaction with learning and 3) the process of un-learning may at times be difficult and may require many opportunities with the material to increase learning transfer.

Discussion

This research applied synectics, the bringing together of seemingly disconnected parts to create something altogether new. Synectics (Gordon, 1961; Gunter et al, 2007; Prince, 1970; Mauzy & Harriman, 2003), Social Reconstruction Ideology (Schiro, 2008; Giroux, 2006), group development theory (Tuckman, 1965) and community development curriculum (Sierra-Jones, 2011; See Appendix A: Community Development Training Manual) were integrated to close the gap between where I was and what I wanted to achieve for this research; a new instructor without a set curriculum, teaching the broad concept of community development to a large group of undergraduates. For this research, I wanted to achieve teaching community development in a way that supported the social ideals of CSUMB Student Housing & Residential Life Mission statement, The CSUMB Vision statement, and the current ideals of living and learning communities, in a way that encouraged new ways of thinking and acting.

Both the community development curriculum that I taught for this research, and the training manual I created applied Synectics to connect Social Reconstruction ideology and synectics instructional models as frameworks. Synectics presented itself as an ideal instructional model with Social Reconstruction Ideology to teach community development. Social

Reconstruction seeks to liberate the minds of learners (Schiro, 2008) and Synectics was created to develop new thought patterns, ideas and break old paradigms (Gordon, 1961; Prince, 1970; Mauzy & Harriman, 2003). Synectics and Social Reconstruction ideology together instigated new ways of thinking and acting, even when groups stay the same or were working on long-standing committees or projects. The trainings offered in this research used both Synectics and Social Reconstruction ideology to teach RA/CAs to depart from old associations and thought patterns they held about community development to envision anew their communities and actions.

The purpose of the Social Reconstruction curriculum ideology is to provide students with information to perceive problems in society, envision a healthier society and take action to change what is unhealthy, dysfunctional or in need of improvement for greater social justice and a healthier community (Schiro, 2008). The training sessions followed the synectics instructional models procedures and incorporated a variety of learning strategies to promote critical thinking and the creation of community action plans.

In keeping with the Social Reconstruction model, I recognized that the most valuable knowledge was a commitment and an understanding of social ideals (Schiro, 2008). In the case of this research, the social ideals were based on the six principles of a purposeful community (Boyer, 1990). Training sessions promoted critical thinking skills using the synectic models (Gordon, 1961; Prince, 1970; Mauzy & Harriman, 2003; Gunter et al, 2007) to encourage learning transfer to the highly unique circumstances that RA/CAs may be affronted with.

RA/CAs reported a greater understanding of community development with each session. By the third session they were able to articulate community development as requiring divergent actions and able to write community action plans. Their community action plans were designed

to connect their new learning about community development, what they knew about the needs of their community and their vision. The actions plans taught in this research, also applied synectics to bring together seemingly disconnected parts into a unified whole.

Envisioning their community action plans and the steps required to fulfill their vision of purposeful living and learning communities was a process of empowering learners to develop new thought patterns and ideas. The synectics procedures built on the strengths of the learner by recognizing that each learner comes with knowledge and strengths. Both Synectics and Social Reconstruction support participants to interact positively with one another (Gordon, 1961; Prince, 1970; Mauzy & Harriman, 2003; Schiro, 2008). Social Reconstruction ideology increased social justice ideals for a better life for all community members. A variety of learning strategies offered multiple times following specific synectic practices and meeting structures, to access the inherent creativity of individuals to construct new concepts (Gordon, 1961; Prince, 1970; Mauzy & Harriman, 2003). The RA/CAs created plans of action to be taken to address the needs of their ever changing communities. The research findings supported that the synectics was effective in teaching the RA/CAs to connect to community development ideals in a new way than how they had previously viewed community development.

Implications for my Practice

This research taught me concrete ways to improve my instructional practices. As my findings indicate, my teaching practices from this point forward will be aware of the model of instruction. I now seek to utilize a variety of learning strategies to improve satisfaction with learning and recognize that learning may at times be difficult, resisted and/or not valued. In this section I will briefly discuss how each has informed and changed my teaching practice.

The model of instruction matters. The synectics instructional models did exactly what they were designed to do. This leads me to believe that instructional models as a whole do what

they are designed to do. This informs that good practice for teaching is to ensure that the purpose of the model of instruction matches the objectives of the curriculum. This research has provided me practice in translating a set of procedures for an instructional model from words on a page into actions into the classroom. For future practice, I have learned that even if the curriculum and instructional model are well aligned they will likely need adjusting to meet the specific needs of the group being taught or the teacher using them.

Variety of learning strategies. The adjustments of the instructional model in this research were in the form of adding a variety of learning strategies to meet the specific needs of the group being taught. Survey and focus group data informed that the more learning strategies I used, the more satisfied participants reported they were learning. Teaching which includes a range of constructivist and cooperative learning strategies will aid students to build their own knowledge. For future practice, I have learned that using a variety of learning strategies will likely still need multiple opportunities to manipulate or play with the concept and that not all students will be eager to learn.

Un-learning may be difficult. Resistance to the process of un-learning and learning with the adults was experienced during this action research. For future practice, at the start of teaching and learning activities the relevance of the work needs to be established. Adults especially needed to see, feel, and know the direct connection between the learning activities and how they may apply learning to their lives. This was illustrated in how well received creative quests were during the training sessions. Participants often criticized training for lacking relevance to their lives and returning participants in particular found fault with the games lengthening training time. Creative quests established relevance to the learning topic and still provided an element of fun and opportunity to build relationships among participants.

Resistance to un-learning and new learning may be characterized by disruptive behaviors. In this research, resistance to un-learning and new learning was predominant when the group was in the storming stage of group development theory (Tuckman, 1965). For future practice, it is imperative to establish clear expectations of behavior and learning outcomes every time at the beginning of the session. It is best to include the participants in a group discussion to create a set of group behavior and learning norms. As the teacher, my role is facilitator of this meeting. If something does not come up that I feel should have been reviewed then I will bring that point forward. Self-propelled learners, is not likely to come from the group. I will be sure to discuss what it means to the group to take charge of their learning. Slowing down and reviewing behavioral and learning norms for each group of learners to clearly establish what is expected of them will be integral to my teaching practice from now on.

Multiple opportunities increase learning transfer. The learning process is supported by effective instructional models, appropriate application of theory, learning strategies, clear teaching and will likely require multiple opportunities with the material to increase learning transfer. From this research, practice is informed to offer many and varied opportunities to manipulate or play with concepts. Ideal learning transfer happens in real settings. This research occurred during staff training. Therefore at best could offer simulations of the actual situations they might find themselves in.

This research supported that even when learners are engaging in real world settings they benefited from the support of the formal teaching and learning setting, or at least the dynamic of teacher and learner to accomplish the, 'ah-ha moment' of understanding the broad elusive concept of community development. Most participants reported requiring three formal trainings

and up to one year working in the field to feel that they fully understood community development.

Summary

A commitment to teaching ideals helps to overcome barriers and to persevere in the face of failure and rejection. This research taught me to face fears, acknowledge barriers, and be honest about my failures and to persist especially when I felt the most hopeless. Having faith in the theories and the synectic models I selected for this research, helped me stay organized, informed decision making and guided learning activities, when I could not perceive that my research was accomplishing its goals.

The critical element of success for this research was allowing synectics to operate on my own learning and un-learning. The popular Pablo Picasso quote “The first act of creation begins with a destructive act” has greater personal meaning now that I have completed this research. I resisted un-learning (Creativity Quotes, 2010). I stormed against new learning. I had to undergo a difficult and often painful process of un-learning. This allowed me to break with less effective ways of thinking and acting to connect with new thinking and innovative actions. Many factors worked in concert to help me to learn to teach with confidence and maintain a teacher presence.

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Appendix A: Community Development Training Manual for Resident Advisors

- Introduction to Community Development
 - Defining Community
 - The Purposeful Community
 - Benefits of Community Development
 - Defining Community Development
 - Barriers to Building Community
 - Action Plan for Building Community
 - A Theoretical Lens for Ongoing Community Assessment
 - Reflection Questions
 - Online Resources for Community Building
 - References
-

Introduction to Community Development

This section covers what every RA/CA should know about basic community development. As a RA/CA you are a community builder and your residents will look to you for help and support in many areas. RA/CA's can help residents create a sense of community by helping them to meet their neighbors through programming and daily interactions. These simple actions are the building blocks of community development. In the RA/CA role you will learn to intentionally plan interactions to help residents build relationships with one another and deepen their sense of belonging in their new community.

Community Development vs. Community Building

Community development is the process of a growth over time that communities experience through the interactions and relationships formed.

Community Building involves the actions that people participate in to develop community.

As a Community Builder you will Continually Develop Inter-Personal Skills

- Communication and Listening Skills
- Problem Solving & Decision Making
- Empowerment and Assertiveness Skills
- Coping Skills
- Cultural Awareness
- Creative Thinking
- Values Clarification

Defining Community

Communities are as different as the people who are part of them, where they exist, and why they are formed. At CSUMB in our Residential Living and Learning communities are created to promote student success. Communities bring and bind people together. The successes of communities are dependent on many factors. Two factors that RA/CAs can directly affect is leading community with a sense of purpose and helping students feel they belong in the community.

The Six Principles of a Purposeful Community

Ernest L. Boyer, a leader of educators and scholar focused his life's work on education and the concept of community in higher education. In 1990, Ernest Boyer conducted a national year-long study of nearly 400 institutions with site visits and surveys. Living and learning communities were in effect but varied greatly in how they were implemented. This uniqueness from institution to institution indicated that student outcomes varied greatly. To unify purposes on campuses across America Boyer proposed six academic and civic standards to provide a formula for day-to-day decision making to define the kind of community every college and university should strive to attain.

The six principles of a purposeful community in education are: purposeful, open, just, disciplined, caring and celebrative and offer guidance in achieving a sense of belonging, security, purpose and vision that institutions should strive to attain.

First, a college or university is an educationally *purposeful* community, a place where faculty and students share academic goals and work together to strengthen teaching and learning on campus.

Second, a college or university is an *open* community, a place where freedom of expression is uncompromisingly protected and where civility is powerfully affirmed.

Third, a college or university is a *just* community, a place where the sacredness of the person is honored and where diversity is aggressively pursued.

Fourth, a college or university is a *disciplined* community, a place where individuals accept their obligations to the group and where well-defined governance procedures guide behavior for the common good.

Fifth, a college or university is a *caring* community, a place where the well-being of each member is sensitively supported and where service to others is encouraged.

Sixth, a college or university is a *celebrative* community, one in which the heritage of the institution is remembered and where rituals affirming both tradition and change are widely shared.

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Benefits of Community Development

As a RA/CA, you will be a part of developing a purposeful community. Before you build community, it helps to understand why it's important and what it is meant to achieve. Below are the guiding principles and characteristics of the type of community that CSUMB strives to for.

Communities provide opportunities:

- To show ourselves fully
- Know others well
- Reach out, connect and help (Sapon-Shevin, 1995).

Educationally Purposeful Community

- Develop skills & supports student success
- Encourages retention through vision, purpose, and goals
- Provides support for leadership

Open Community

- Communicates openly and encourages flexibility, creativity, and individuality
- Respect its members & seeks to collaborate with others
- Leadership that functions from the top down and the bottom up

Just Community

- Moves beyond tolerance to acceptance of diversity
- Shared discussion, decisions and actions
- Handles issues in an unbiased way
- Individuals and groups feel empowered

Disciplined Community

- Seeks democratic solutions to address concerns and conflicts
- Individuals try to solve problems before seeking outside help
- Supports a greater sense of safety
- Supports Community Standards to guide behavior for the common good

Caring Community:

- Provide its members with a sense of belonging
- Members know each other's names and show that they care about the community
- Provides regular opportunities for group members to plan and network
- Provides opportunities for personal growth and relational experiences

Celebrative Community

- Shared experiences
- Community Pride
- Acknowledges historical and cultural uniqueness

When community development is fostered there are direct and visible benefits

Reduction in damages and student conduct problems

A safer and friendlier environment for students to live in

Changes RA/ CA image from "enforcer" to helper, advisor, and/or facilitator

Acknowledging Barriers to Building Community to Overcome Them

- Time & Funding
- Lack of member support
- Lack of respect for differences
- Prejudice and discrimination
- Isolation & Refusal to change

Questions for Reflection

How can we create multiple opportunities for people to share experiences and celebrate?
How can we help others to feel safe to take risks, make new friends, and have new experiences?
How can we encourage inclusion of all persons, including those w/disabilities, introverted, or very different than us?

Action Plan for Building Community

In this role you will write program proposals and hold events that help to foster a welcoming environment that is conducive to building relationships. Action plans help articulate the overall goals for community and help to keep those goals in perspective.

There are benefits to writing action plans. You will have a plan and be organized as the community is just forming. You will have a starting point and be able to rate the successes of the community.

It is likely your action plan will change as you learn more about your community and residents. Communities are ever-changing and need on-going support. Utilize resources and ask for help when needed.

Step 1: Assess Community: Get to know your community (wing/floor/court). Learn about its member's culture, living styles (i.e. night owl/early bird), educational goals/major, and areas of interest, areas of diversity.

Step 2: Identify Unifying Themes/Needs: Communities with a common purpose provide more opportunities to build connections between residents. Themes can help build cohesiveness. Unity at CSUMB is all residents are students.

Step 3: Develop Community Goals with a purpose: Use what you have learned about your community. Draw on the personal skills, individuality and creativity of yourself and the community members to develop goals to support the development of your community and the growth of your residents in their academic and residential success.

Step 4: A community action plan is an ongoing process. Continue to assess, identify themes/needs, and develop goals. An action plan helps the RA/CA to clearly express how the actions they are taking benefits community and meets the needs of the students.

[A Theoretical Lens for Ongoing Community Assessment](#)

Being able to assess where the group or individuals are using a developmental model is a valuable community development tool. Each stage describes what community members may be doing and suggestions on how to respond.

Stage 1: Forming- Community members are typically positive and polite. Some are anxious, as they haven't yet worked what the expectations of their new community are or will involve. Some are simply excited. Others may be frustrated and simply want to get on with their own agendas. This stage is fairly short and may only last a single meeting.

As a leader, you play a dominant role in this stage as member roles and responsibilities are less clear. Hold group discussions about how the community will work. Understand that most do not feel a part of the community. It is your job to help them feel a part of the community!

Stage 2: Storming - Community members have a general understanding of community and some react by questioning how worthwhile the goal of the community is. They may resist taking on tasks or rebel against the rules. Some may withdraw or feel overwhelmed. Resources for support and rules may not be fully understood.

This is the stage when many communities fail. As a leader, your authority may be challenged. Leaders may feel that they are on an emotional roller coaster as they try to focus on the job at hand without the support of established processes or relationships with their residents.

Stage 3: Norming - Community members at this stage have made it through difficult times and now come to respect your authority as a leader. Relationships are stronger and residents often socialize together. They are more likely to ask for help. Progress towards community goals is being made. Lapsing back into previous storming behaviors still occurs, but with less frequency. As a leader you see the larger picture of and can support residents accordingly. Stay objective and continue to support relationship building and boundary setting.

Stage 4: Performing - Community members at this stage are more willing to follow rules and encourage rule following of others. They help one another and seek to put forth their ideas and see them through.

As a leader, you can now focus on accomplishing projects and tasks collaboratively. There is less conflict and community feels easy compared with earlier on. Expect resistance from a few.

Stage 5: Adjourning or Mourning - Community members at this stage are pulling away and preparing for the change; going home for summer, graduation, moving to a new area, etc... Depending on their circumstances they may be very excited, stressed or concerned. Either way this is a stressful time.

As a leader the community needs your support to help them reduce stress of the uncertainties and remind them of their successes. This is good time to help community members reflect on values, what has been accomplished and draw personal conclusions. The reflection piece can be a valuable tool as a community breaks up or separates, particularly for members who became highly integrated, developed close relationships with other members and for those whose future roles or jobs look uncertain.

Tying it all Together

Knowing the purpose, benefits and barriers to building community and understanding group development can help RA/CAs to effectively address the needs of their community. Consider what you know about your community. You will find that both your skills and your resident's skill develop over time and these actions taken together, build community!

Online Resources for Community Building

Community Tool Box. University of Kansas. <http://ctb.ku.edu/en/default.aspx>

A global resource on essential skills for building healthy communities. It offers practical guidance in creating change and improvement.

Washington Center for Improving the Quality Undergraduate Education.

<http://www.evergreen.edu/washcenter/lcFaq.htm> A national directory of learning communities provides information about institutions across the United States. Also offers team training in a summer institute and a bank of resources on learning communities.

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Appendix B: Resident Advisor & Community Assistant Position Description

The RA/CA leadership role can be a remarkable life-changing experience. This position, as a student affairs educator, has tremendous rewards in the form of skills, experience, lifelong friendships, knowledge, and a true ability to make a positive difference in the lives of others. Although you will be challenged in terms of your patience, time management, organization, academics, boundaries, and personal relationships, many student staff members have felt this opportunity was completely worth the time and energy invested.

In general, RA/CAs provides support that assists students in achieving personal, social, and academic goals, as well as helping them to develop skills essential to productive citizenry. RA/CAs have the unique opportunity to build community through being accessible; through an array of social, educational, and recreational activities, encouraging resident interaction, and being a role model as an interested and active member of the CSUMB community.

The CSUMB student encounters many complex living issues due to our unique residence hall, suite-style, and apartment living arrangements. Issues often revolve around the use and maintenance of shared living space, alcohol and other drug usage, noise levels, and personal schedules. Individuals who share Student Housing and Residential Life's commitment, passion, and dedication to the following values will not only be successful relationship and community builders, but will experience tremendous benefits as a leader, role model, friend, student, peer, and colleague:

A. Building relationships with residents and between residents. A RA/CAs primary goal is as a community builder, knowing their residents and helping them to get to know each other. Network them, support them, teach them, laugh with them, cry with them, learn with them, and grow with them. This is the heart of what Student Housing and Residential Life student affairs educators do.

B. Nurture student success & satisfaction. RA/CAs facilitates discussions, activities, and events that promote academic progress and achievement, in addition to supporting and assisting residents with critical thinking and problem solving skills. As leaders at CSUMB, upholding community standards to the best of the RA/CAs ability is critical, being sure to address issues and concerns in timely manner. Our goal is to make living on campus be the best experience possible.

C. An ethic of care. Our staff reacts quickly and appropriately to issues and concerns. Students, parents, faculty, and staff feel heard, valued, and cared about by our work with them.

Reflect on the following quote about the RA/CA position when considering this position:

This is the best job you can possibly have as an undergraduate. It will teach you what your strengths and weaknesses are and reveal to you how selfish you can occasionally be. It will test your relationships with significant others and put at least a temporary strain on your academics. You will experience here-to-now undreamed of levels of stress and you will live under the careful scrutiny of critics who observe and comment upon each action you undertake. You will observe the best and worst of human personhood. You will want to quit, some will, but for those of you who stick it out and focus on serving their fellow students . . . you will be rewarded with the greatest experience of all. You will earn the trust of your peers, be of value to others, and learn how to function in community and society. This has a steep price tag and I urge you to consider the cost of the meal before you sit down to the table. Will Keim, former CA, Community Director

Expectations of this Leadership Position- Under the supervision of a Community Director, RA/CAs serve as liaisons between residents and Student Housing & Residential Life. The following sections outline what Student Housing & Residential Life expects of RA/CAs, as well as what our student staff can expect from the department.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS

1. A student in good academic standing at CSUMB working towards a degree
2. Enrolled at fulltime status
3. Minimum Grade Point Average 2.5 for undergraduates & 3.0 grade for graduate

FAILURE TO MEET REQUIREMENTS - Failure to maintain these academic requirements will result in academic probation and/or early termination from the position. Missing 1 of 3 three criteria will result in academic probation for one semester. If all three criteria are not met, at the end of the probationary period, it will result in termination from the position. Missing two or more of these criteria and the end of an academic semester will result in termination from the position and ineligibility to apply again until all criteria are met.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

4. Approachable - friendly, open, and helpful attitude when interacting with others
5. Strong verbal and written communication skills
6. Awareness of Student Housing and Residential Life Community Standards
7. Awareness of the importance to maintaining safe and secure living environments
8. Awareness of the importance of educationally focused living environments
9. Knowledge of, and ability to work with, diverse individuals and groups
10. Demonstrated commitment to CSUMB Vision Statement and ability to contribute to its implementation within Student Housing and Residential Life

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

11. Experience in leading peers and/or serving as a positive role model
12. Ability to establish and maintain cooperative working relationships
13. Ability to effectively mediate in problem situations
14. Willingness to experience new and different opportunities
15. Being open to learning new skills
16. Ability to be flexible in unclear and ambiguous situations

REQUIREMENTS FOR HIRE

17. Have at least one completed semester of on-campus living experience
18. Complete and pass a Live Scan background check prior to the start of employment

BASIC JOB REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

19. Available to work for one academic year, as well as during the summer
20. Must be available to be contacted daily
21. Must check phone/voicemail and CSUMB email, and staff mailbox daily
22. Allow CSUMB email addresses to be published and made available to the residents
23. Private phone numbers will be made available staff for emergency purposes only
24. Responsible for reading the RA/CA Training manual and additional assigned literature
25. Responsible for reading, knowing and enforcing the Community Standards
26. Complete sexual harassment online training
27. Must be in good standing with Conduct, Judicial Status, and financially
28. Serve as a role model and student affairs educator
29. Uphold and adhere to all University policies, Student Code of Conduct, and Student Housing & Residential Life Community Standards
30. Agree to not more than 20 hours a week of activities aside from school & RA/CA role. Your direct supervisor must approve any outside commitments max 20 hours, including

pre-existing or new employment and/or leadership opportunities, which may interfere with successful service as a RA/CA. Schedule of classes and other commitments outside of the position are to be submitted to their supervisor 1 week before classes begin.

31. Must participate in all scheduled meetings, staff training, and in-services
32. Required to work Student Housing & Residential Life events.
33. Available to be part of the on call duty rotation during fall, winter, and spring breaks
34. Sign up for Otter Alerts through their CSUMB email account
(highly recommended RA/ CAs sign up for Otter Alert service through their cell phone)

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

35. Court/floor walks conducted on a daily basis to connect with residents
36. Check for safety issues, and assesses facilities concerns daily
37. Building relationships and community is the primary job focus for RA/CAs. As such, it is also expected that RA/CAs spend the majority of nights while on-campus in their assigned apartment and available to their residents.
38. Maintain an "open door" policy in order to see and interact with residents
39. Serve as a resource and referral agent, identifying potential problems (i.e. substance abuse, alcohol, dependence, psychological distress, date/acquaintance rape, etc.), informing their direct supervisor or CD on Duty, directing student(s) to appropriate resources, and documenting situation.
40. Incident report writing and all documentation of resident/guest behavior must be submitted within 24 hours or by 8am the next business day, whichever is sooner
41. Mediate conflict between community members
42. Initially respond to any alleged violation of Community Standards
43. Maintains confidentiality while working with community members - Any breach of confidentiality is a serious matter and may be cause for removal as a staff member
44. MUST report life threatening situations, sexual assault/abuse, alleged Community Standards violations, and any potentially dangerous situations to their direct supervisor or CD on Duty immediately.
45. Interprets and explains Community Standards, including rationale and background, to help residents understand the impact negative behavior can have on a community.
46. Participate on a department wide committee: Recruitment and Selection; Training and Development; Assessment and Evaluation; Residential Housing Association; or department-sponsored programming.

Residential Life and Community Programming

47. Plans, publicizes, coordinates, and evaluates programs in accordance with the programming model and the needs of the community. On average, RA/CAs coordinates 2 programs per month.
48. Assists with the efforts of Associated Students, RHA, and other student groups.
49. Participates and encourages resident involvement in Otter Days and Welcome Week
50. Participates and encourages resident involvement in Residential Life/University events
51. RA/CAs on duty over break periods and long weekends may be expected to coordinate programs for students remaining on-campus.
52. Meal plans/ OtterBucks used to eat in common areas to build relationships

On-Call Duty

53. Participate in a rotating duty schedule that operates 365 days a year
54. When on duty, RA/CAs may be expected to conduct frequent Fire Walks if emergency systems fail temporarily, serve as resources at CSUMB sponsored events, or conduct community programming.

55. Must be prepared to deal with behavioral problems and emergencies with the support of professional staff as outlined in training.

Administrative

56. Assist with Move-in/Check-in/Check-out, Welcome Week/Orientation, and other events
57. Reports regularly on a formal basis weekly in person
58. Submits weekly reports to supervisor on community happenings and concerns.
59. Participate and assist in assessment including ; staff, community & campus partners
60. Works desk/office hours as assigned by supervisor, if applicable.
61. Reports resident and facilities concerns to supervisor, conducting follow-up as needed.
62. Distributes campus handouts/flyers and department materials in a timely manner
63. Complete all paperwork and assignments within the expected timeline
64. Completes other administrative tasks as assigned.

Keys and Building Security - RA/CAs are trusted with a key during the term of their position that provides access to a common space in the area to which they are assigned. It is critical all staffs are aware of, and agree to, the following:

65. Maintain possession of the key at all times (either on their person or in a designated location in their individual room)
66. The community center doors will be closed and locked at all times
67. At no time should another person or staff be in possession of a community center key not issued to them by the University Lockshop/Alliance Residential Company
68. If a key is lost, the responsible RA/CA will incur all necessary expenses
69. When no longer a RA/CA, keys will be returned immediately to their supervisor

Training and Meetings

70. Participates fully RA/CA training programs/sessions/in-services.
71. Assists Group Selection Process of incoming RA/CA Staff or two days in February
72. Assists with Individual RA & CA interviews for three hours in February
73. Attends weekly staff meetings and in-services held Wednesdays from 12 to 2 pm
74. Participate in RA/CA Spring Orientation (*this is an all day event*).
75. Actively involved in other student training programs as assigned by supervisor
76. Attends department wide committee meetings as assigned: Recruitment and Selection; Training and Development; Assessment and Evaluation; Residential Housing Association; or department-sponsored programming.
77. Prepare and advertise for, and lead, floor/community meetings.
78. RA/CAs must receive approval at least 24 hours in advance from their direct supervisor if they cannot attend meetings and make other arrangements for assigned tasks.

EVALUATION - Formal evaluations are conducted bi-yearly by the RA/CAs direct supervisor with input from students, other RA/CAs, and Residential Life student affairs educators. While serving as a Student Housing and Residential Life staff your performance will be used to determine eligibility to be rehired for the following year.

COMPENSATION RA/CAs –

Being offered the RA/CA position has the following compensations based on position.

- Priority to work the Service Desk for a minimum of 5 paid hours per week
- One whole living unit
- Priority registration for classes.

CAs only - \$100 in Otter Bucks per month that they are in the position

RAs only - Meal Plan at the Gold Level and \$50 in Otter Bucks for working University holidays maximum 11 days per year

Appendix C: Making the Strange Familiar Work Sheet for K-12 Model

Note: The area for writing answers has been reduced to save space.

Step 1: Define the concept: Community Development
Reflect on what you think the word means to you. Learners may work in pairs or small groups to discuss meanings of concepts and build shared knowledge. Compose a list of all the words that you associate with community development.
List answers here:
Step 2: Create direct analogies.
Look at your complete list and identify themes. Which words have the same or similar meanings?
List answers here:
Step 3: Describe personal analogies.
Compare your words and ideas of community development to something that is a plant or animal. What would it feel like to have the characteristics or traits of what you described? Take a moment to feel this plant or animal. Describe what it feels like. How do you think it feels to be an_____? Why do you think that way? Write down the new descriptions.
List answers here:

Step 4: Identify compressed conflicts.
Look at your new descriptions and identify themes or words that are opposites of each other? Pair-up words that seem to be in conflict in some way. Identify the pairs of words which strike you as the most different contrasted. Can you think of a non-living thing that fits both word descriptions?
List answers here:
Step 5: Create a new direct analogy based on the compressed conflicts.
Now compare two unlike things. Select the pair of words that stuck you as most contrasted. Make a fantasy creature to be analogous of the contrasted pair of words you selected. Review your descriptions and word lists again. Analyze again which words have the same or similar meaning.
List answers here:
Step 6: Synthesis.
Analyze all lists. Identify words or phrases that stand out to you from each section. Expand on those words to generate more descriptive words and phrases.
Write your answers here:
Identify a theme that incorporates the elements of the final list. Create a new personal definition of what community development means to you from your final list.
Write your answers here:

Appendix D: Hybrid Synectics Model as Implemented Fall 2010

Model Used	Steps	Learning Activity/Content	Learning Strategies
None		Welcome or ice breaker	none
None		Empowerment and validation	Culturally Responsive Teaching
None		Review learning outcomes	Modeling
None		Creating a safe space for learning	Group Rule Setting
None		Challenge yourself to learn	Culturally Responsive Teaching
			Self-Assessment
K-12	Step 1:Provide information	Read Training Manual: Definition of Community	Read-A-Loud
Original	Step 1:Identify and understand the problem Step 2: Collect Relevant Information Step 3: Mull it over	Defining Community: What communities are you a part of? How do you contribute to those communities? What does contributing to these communities do for you?	Questioning Think-Pair-Share Synectics
K-12	Step 1:Provide information	Read Training Manual: Six Principles of Community	Read-A-Loud
Original	Step 1:Identify and understand the problem Step 2: Collect Relevant Information Step 3: Mull it over Step 4: Speculate Step 5: Develop ideas	Six Principles of Community: Form six groups by area staffs. Each group reads, learns, writes out and shares back about one of the six principles	Jig-Saw Large Group discussion Synectics
Corporate	Step 1: Dispel misconceptions Step3: Recognize barriers and Fears	Barriers, fears & misconceptions of community development: Use posters on six principles A volunteer to write up answers in a T-Chart. Discuss and identify common barriers, fears and misconceptions about community and community development, which either RA/CAs have or residents may have.	Large Group Discussion Synectics T-Chart

Model Used	Steps	Learning Activity/Content	Learning Strategies
K-12	Step 1: Provide information	Benefits of community: Use posters on six principles A volunteer to write up answers in a T-Chart.	Large Group Discussion Synectics T-Chart
K-12	Step2: Present analogy Step 3: Identify personal analogy to create compressed conflicts Step 4: Compare the compressed conflict with the subject Step 5: Identify differences Step 6: Re-examine original subject	Identify Duality in RA/CA Role: Present analogy of fences that do both to keep people safe and in. Reflective questions to create personal analogy Re- examine the T-Charts and posters on the six principles. Identify contradictions Identify compressed conflicts and duality in the RA/CA role Re-examine original subject of community development as whole reflecting on all the new information we generated together Discuss together.	Analogies Questioning Reflection Analogies Self-Assessment Group discussion T-Charts Journaling Synectics
Corporate Step 4	Corporate Step 4: Breaking and making connections	Break with old ideas and paradigms and make new connections: Wrap up previous discussion And lead into breaking and making connections. How has their thinking about community development changed? What did they think before this training and what do they think now? Write their ideas in their journals.	Questioning Reflection Self-assessment Group discussion Synectics Journaling
K-12	Step 7: Create new direct analogies	Create new direct analogies –write in journals	Journaling Synectics

Model Used	Steps	Learning Activity/Content	Learning Strategies
None	Break time-ten minutes	Break Offer coffee, tea and snacks Play a video slide show of music and information about East and West cultural communication	Meeting the basic needs of people Supporting different learning styles
None	Play a active movement game	Shoe game	Support different learning modalities Adding fun
K-12	Step 1:Provide information	Read Manual: Group development theory	Read-A-Loud
Original	Step 1:Identify and understand the problem Step 2: Collect Relevant Information Step 3: Mull it over Step 4: Speculate Step 5: Develop ideas Step 6: Select the best idea and implement it	Case studies/scenario review of how group development theory may look in the communities we serve. Count off by 5. Then split again if groups are too large. Read scenarios then use manual to classify the stage of group development to scenario. Think of how to support answer. Have each group share back.	Small group work Think-Pair-Share Questioning Simulations Synectics
Original	Step 1:Identify and understand the problem Step 2: Collect Relevant Information Step 3: Mull it over Step 4: Speculate Step 5: Develop ideas Step 6: Select the best idea and implement it	Answer questions for deepening relationships and community building. In Manual. Pair up with one new staff member and one returning staff member until all new staff members are with a returning staff member. Then the rest of the returning staff pair up.	Think-Pair-Share Questioning Synectics
K-12	Step 1:Provide information	Use Manual: and refer to Action plan process Provide information on a Action Plan process map And review	Read-a-loud Synectics

Model Used	Steps	Learning Activity/Content	Learning Strategies
Original	Step 1: Identify and understand the problem Step 2: Collect Relevant Information Step 3: Mull it over Step 4: Speculate Step 5: Develop ideas Step 6: Select the best idea and implement it	Reflect on what you have learned today. Use journals or notepaper to write your ideas. Then using your blue SMART goals sheet write out a goal for your community to be part of your action plan. The Blue sheets are to be submitted to your directors.	Reflection Journaling and goal setting Synectics
Corporate and K-12	Evaluate	Reflection journal writing and online surveys	Reflection journaling Synectics
None		Thanked participants. Gave a thank you gift that was analogous to their work. The poem " <i>The Rose Within</i> " was attached to a rose. (Included below). Compared people to roses and community development work as reaching past thorns to help people bloom.	Analogies

The Rose Within

A man planted a rose bush and watered it faithfully. Before it blossomed, he examined it. He saw the bud that would soon blossom, but noticed the many thorns upon the stem and he thought, "How can any beautiful flower come from a plant burdened with so many sharp thorns? Saddened by this thought, he decided not to water the rose. The rose never bloomed and died.

So it is with many people. Within everyone there are thorns and there are roses. The good qualities planted in us, grow amid the thorns of our faults. Too many of us see only the thorns, the defects, and never realize our full potential.

Some people do not see the rose within themselves.
Someone else must show the rose they can be.
One of the greatest gifts a person can possess
Is to be able to reach past the thorns of another,
And find the rose within them.

~anonymous~

Appendix E: Synectics as a Framework for Training Scheduling

K-12 Synectics Steps	Training Day 1	Training Day 2	Training Day 3
Not in the model: Welcome or Ice breaker	General Welcome and Yoga	Autograph Bingo	Game: Two truths and lie
Provide information	Universal Design	Mediation	Creative Advertising and Marketing
Present analogy	Creative Quest Human knot	Story: 3 Billy Goats Gruff	Creative Quest: Little Red Hen
Identify personal analogy to create compressed conflicts	Creative Quest Human knot	Creative Quest Anansi & the pot of Wisdom	Envisioning Community: through art
Compare the compressed conflict with the subject	Creative Quest Human knot	Creative Quest Anansi & the pot of Wisdom	Envisioning Community: through art
Identify differences	Leadership, Strength and Recognition	Creative Quest Anansi & the pot of Wisdom	Envisioning Community: journaling
Re-examine original subject	Dinner/ Journal Activity	Debrief as part of quest activity	Envisioning Community: journaling
Create new direct analogies	Area staff Meetings	Act/watch scenarios often encountered	Envisioning Community: journaling
Evaluate	Online survey	Online survey	Journaling/ Online surveys