

Difficulties First Year Students Encounter in Regard to Establishing a Sense of Community on Campus

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Abstract: In our ethnography, our team conducted extensive research on what difficulties first-year students encounter when seeking a community at California State University, Chico. We chose this as our research question because we have noticed that when the new students move in, they have to restart by making new friends and community. During this research, our group went around campus asking first-year students if we could interview them and explained to them our research question. After our interviews, we analyzed our results to gather insights into our main question. The data we gained from our interviews helps us come to the conclusion of how to help incoming freshmen gain community and see where the students may struggle in the journey of becoming a part of something.

Research Question

- What difficulties do first-year students encounter in establishing a sense of community on campus?
- What avenues do students use to socialize with new groups of people?
- How do students choose to get involved on campus?
- This is an important question because transition from high school to college is a critical step in our collegiate journey.

Methods

- Interviews
 - Conducted interviews in and outside of dorms.
 - Only interviewed first-year students
 - Annotated data and made into a table to be easily compared
- Auto-ethnography
 - Form of ethnographic research in which we, as the researchers, use self-reflection and connect our personal experiences with the stories conveyed to us by our interview participants.
 - We used it to understand the shared experiences we have with other first year students.

Results

- An important result was that we found a lot of students said they wanted to be in a club
 - We surmised that students are actively seeking to participate on campus
- Another important result is that students living in the dorms find the social scene relatively inclusive of most students from all backgrounds.
 - This is an important idea because it shows first-year students are finding their community in the dorms

Recommendations

- An important recommendation can be a Chico State Yelp app
 - This is important so students can ask others for help when they are not familiar with their new community.
- Another important recommendation is a CSU Chico Club app
 - This is important because students want to be in clubs but are having trouble finding them.

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