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Cultural Analysis of the IT Minor Cohort

Culture is a complicated thing. It comes from community, and communities come in all shapes and size, with all sorts of members and backgrounds and circumstances, . They can be something as small as a team working on a project, or something as massive as an established religion, or a national identity. Some might even argue that the globe as a whole is one massive community. But, there's one thing that all communities have in common: the fact that they're all different, and every one of them has their own culture, with all its own little cultural quirks.

So, let's take a dive into the culture of a rather small community: the ITEC Emerald cohort. Before we can analyze the culture of the Emerald, we first have to analyze the Emerald itself. The Emerald is composed of three teachers, and a batch of students, all of whom vary in age, background, and personality; quite widely in some cases. It's almost like a little melting pot with a vast array of flavors making up the whole. Each individual of the community has their own bit of culture that they bring to make up the whole of the cohort. This enables a unique blending of different cultures to create one larger one, potentially greater than the sum of its parts. There are kids fresh out of highschool, there are people who have kids of their own, there's people who bring culture from other countries with them, and it all blends together into a cohesive, close-knit group.

Now, there are many facets to this Emerald. One of the most outstanding might be how friendly and colloquial everyone in the cohort is with each other. Not many classes are encouraged to socialize and bond with each other as much as the cohort is. Even with the teachers, the relationship to the students is less buttoned up and formal than with most other

student/professor relationships. This brings with it a sense of relaxedness about the community, encouraging members to speak more colloquially with each other than other similar communities, to connect with each other on a more personal level than simply 'we work with each other.' With this comes cohesion and teamwork, a sense of being part of something bigger. For instance, there are multiple little sets of people in the cohort that have banded together and initiated a form of group notation and communication, aiding each other in their learning of the material being presented to us each day. They share notes and help each other with homework, they prop each other up in their efforts to understand the content, each contributing a different viewpoint to their group. This, in turn, prompts an even closer bond between the participants, creating a compounding effect that brings the community closer. This is somewhat influenced by the setting we all find ourselves in. A college campus. A classroom on that campus. Most often, we see each other in this enclosed space, very often listening to a lecture, working on assignments together. Most often, the majority of the community is heavily engaged in this, participating, asking questions, answering questions, working together to see how something works, socializing during lulls in the talking. It's a dynamic environment, with all of us participating, contributing to the experience.

Furthermore, there are the stories we hear from the teachers. Pieces of history that they tell us either for inspiration, or simply because it was a tangent that was prompted by a wayward question from a student. These contribute to the identity of this culture, acting like a catalyst for further interaction between the members. Such as the story that we were given one day about the earlier days of the program, when ITEC had its own web server that it maintained to teach the students, and how one day an unfortunate series of events led to the servers being confiscated by

the FBI. It was an engaging, interesting point of interaction between the teacher and the students. Of course, as with any community, there are rules amongst the cohort, written and unwritten. Most of the written rules are simply set forth by the college, a basis on which the class works in relation to the system of education. As for unwritten, there is a certain etiquette that we follow as students: an understood respect to be had towards superiors, an expectation to adhere to certain standards in our work, an understanding that we are encouraged to explore and learn things on our own initiative. These are based on values that are held by the cohort: we're all here to learn, to explore, to create. We're here to find our footing in this dynamic environment, to acquire the tools and skills we need to apply these concepts in the world beyond academia. We're all here for a similar purpose, and we're all here to support each other in attaining that goal.

So, the ITEC Emerald cohort. A community in of itself. A developing culture based on a mutual desire to learn. A team, focused on a collective goal. An environment, breeding cohesion and trust amongst its members. A family, with shared values and expectations for each other.