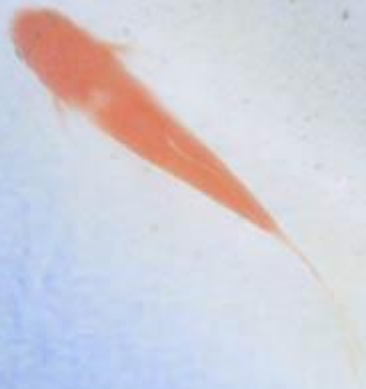


Creating Academic Communities:

Why Bother?



Good for students, Good for us

- Good for Students:
- being a member of a community (group) is a source of individual *wellbeing* (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000) and *happiness* measured both by self report (Layard 2005) and in production of endorphins (Dunbar 2006).



Good for Students, Good for Us

- Good for Us:
- Higher education is increasingly driven by satisfaction of quality indicators
- The NSS measures student perceptions and happy students are more likely to be satisfied

Good for Students, Good for Us

- Good for us:
- Members of a group share the group's values and are more co-operative towards members of the group (Charness Rigotti and Rustichini 2007; Goette, Huffman and Meier 2006; Majolo et al 2006)
- and recognise the authority of in-group members (Smith, Tyler, Huo, Ortiz and Lind 1998)



CONFORMITY

America is the land of the rugged individualist. Just so long as you're ruggedly being an individual like everyone else.

Community Benefits

- Being part of a community with students will:
 1. dissolve *us and them* attitudes common in consumerist metaphors of education
 2. Involve students taking on board a school/subject's academic values (improved good honours stats)
 3. Work **with** staff rather than **against** them



School of Psychology

- Students explicitly told that they are a member of an academic community in induction and *Getting Started*; do group work
- Invited to visiting speaker seminars (timetabled for all psychology students and staff)
- Have a subject-only structure: the subject pool
- Subject related assessment/course events

