Hello everybody—Chris Reynolds…we’re going to talk about Community of Inquiry and I am going to relate it to my hobby. So, if you will bear with me for a second while I raise my hood on my beautiful ’69 Camaro….

Let’s talk about COI and relate it to a hobby… we’re embarking down the road of the Community of Inquiry and its impact on teaching and learning. What I like to do is try to remember things in terms of my hobbies and things that I enjoy doing. I am a “car-guy” and I like old muscle cars and much like my ’69 Camaro here. If I take some of the terms that we find in the Community of Inquiry—look at say, “social presence, teaching presence and cognitive presence” and try to relate it to my hobby, it helps me remember it a little bit better.

I am expressing to you my joy of the hobby and that term of expression is an example of the “Social Presence.” And in teaching, we want to also be enthusiastic about our task or the teaching that we do and by doing that, we enhance the “Social Presence” for our students and we help them feel like they are a part of the greater picture. We encourage open communication, which also helps build group cohesion. And again, likening back to my hobby, our car group is the same way. We openly communicate, we collaborate and therefore, we exhibit the signs of “Social Presence.”

The other element that is equally important is “Teaching Presence.” Now, we are all teachers and we teach our classes and we teach our students. It’s very important that as teachers that we remember that a well-designed and organized class actually helps make the class run better, and I don’t think that anybody disagrees with that. But, one thing that we can do, and again likening it to my hobby, is we teach one another about cars or about engines. We encourage collaboration, we provide direct instruction, we say—you know, to change the spark plugs this is what you have to do. Or, tighten down a header; you have to do it this way. So, in a sense what we are doing is developing our “Teaching Presence.”

The last of the three COI presences is the “Cognitive Presence” and this is my favorite of the three presences. It is usually initiated by a triggering event and in this case, using my hobby as an example, the triggering event for me are muscle cars. We have like individuals who all love the hobby of cars, whether they are street rods, muscle cars, classic cars, what have you—but we all explore our hobby. We have the spirit of exploring and what that does is it ignites the drive inside you to want to learn more. It help you integrate your thoughts with other learners, or in this case other hobbyists. It also helps you come to a resolution that, “this is my hobby and this is what I enjoy doing and therefore I am going to do it.” Well, within the cognitive realm there is a sense of puzzlement and in this case, I am continually puzzled about this beautiful engine and what I can do to tune it to get more horsepower out of it or what I can do to make it run...
smoother. That allows me then to tweak it and work with it, but it also allows me to collaborate with my friends. Through this information exchange, we then examine and exhibit another form of the “Cognitive Presence.” We connect ideas—one person may have a certain method of tuning a carburetor and we may try that method. If it then works, then we have applied a new idea and that again, is an example of the “Cognitive Presence.”

So, utilizing my hobby helps me remember what the COI is and I encourage you to try to also relate it to something that you enjoy doing. Well, that’s it…let’s go out and see if I got this carburetor tuned right. I am really anxious to see if my COI metaphor really worked in adjusting this carburetor.

[Chris closes the hood and walks around to the driver’s seat and gets into the car]

I think that we can all agree that the Community of Inquiry is a completely new path for us here at APUS. It is going to give us a chance to be better teachers. It’s going to give us a chance to reach our students. It’s going to provide us with the opportunity to be better at everything that we do. Well, I am going to take the car [Chris starts the car—engine sound] and make sure that what I did to my carburetor worked.

Goodbye everybody!

[Chris backs out of the garage and drives away—video end]