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Author

KOZAR, Olga (LUM, Juliet F.)

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Abstract

Pursuing doctoral study away from one's institution may have logistical advantages but many off-campus doctoral students face challenges in accessing the sorts of training and collegial support offered to their on-campus counterparts. To enhance and maintain the quality of education offered to off-campus and distance PhD candidates, higher education institutions need ways to provide them with access to training and communities of practice that are pedagogically effective, practical to implement and sustainable. This paper reports on an empirical study that investigates the perceived effectiveness of three online doctoral writing groups, involving ten off-campus PhD students in total, that varied in degree of facilitation and mode of communication. The findings suggest that online doctoral writing groups can be perceived as effective regardless of the presence of an expert facilitator and that groups that include synchronous communication seem to lead to higher levels of satisfaction than groups run only asynchronously. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)