Doctoral Connectedness as a Measure of Student Success

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OLC Accelerate
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Student persistence at the doctoral level is approximately 50% (10-15% higher attrition rate in online programs).

Challenges at the dissertation stage with interaction, integration, isolation, and support.

Gap: Identify interventions useful in facilitating online doctoral students’ sense of connectedness.

Connectedness is more meaningful during dissertation stage in overcoming obstacles.

(Kennedy, Terrell, & Lohle, 2015; Terrell, Snyder, & Dringus, 2009)
Research Method & Design

- Quantitative, quasi-experimental, pre-post design
- Doctoral Student Connectedness Scale (DSCS)
- Dissertation Resources Workshop
- Dependent t-test to analyze means scores
- Convenience sample of 39 participants
The workshop content covered the dissertation process, expectations, tools, tutorials, support, and resources as well as the importance of building connections with the doctoral community.
Research Findings

• The average pre and post means indicated a moderate level of connectedness.
• The pre-and post-scores were significantly positively correlated; a statistically significant difference was not found.
• The workshop survey showed moderate levels of satisfaction with the workshop experience, expectations, and the content covered.
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Empower students by offering orientations or just-in-time trainings to create connections, explain expectations, degree demands, & relevant resources regarding the dissertation process (Kennedy, Terrell, & Lohle, 2015; Di Pierro, 2012; Terrell, Snyder, & Dringus, 2009).
Future Recommendations

- The balance begins with *meeting evolving student needs* to include more flexible, self-paced options.
- There is a growing technology trend toward *on-demand opportunities* with unlimited access and seamless connections.
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