

Supporting Online Kinesiology Graduate Students in a Doctorate Program

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Abstract:

At the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, my nursing and allied health liaison areas include a growing number of online degrees. Although it can be challenging to make contact with online students, I've been fortunate to work with the online educational doctorate in kinesiology (KIN EdD) program. Thanks to the program's structure and enthusiastic director, I have had a number of opportunities to provide direct library instruction and assistance.

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Article:

*****Note: Full text of article below**

Supporting Online Kinesiology Graduate Students in a Doctorate Program

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At the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, my nursing and allied health liaison areas include a growing number of online degrees. Although it can be challenging to make contact with online students, I've been fortunate to work with the online educational doctorate in Kinesiology (KIN EdD) program. Thanks to the program's structure and enthusiastic director, I have had a number of opportunities to provide direct library instruction and assistance.

Kinesiology is "the study of physical activity and its impact on health, society, and quality of life" (The American Kinesiology Association, n.d.). Curriculum varies by institution, but some specialties include the physiology of physical activity, sports and exercise psychology, biomechanics, and history and sociology of physical activity (Hoffman, 2009). These degrees can lead to research and professional practice in coaching and sport education, therapeutic exercise, health and fitness, and other opportunities (Hoffman, 2009).

My institution began offering the online educational doctorate in Kinesiology (KIN EdD) in 2014. This four-year program provides academic and research advancement for professionals practicing in kinesiology fields (Department of Kinesiology, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, 2016). The coursework is fully online, with no real time meetings required.



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However, each cohort must visit campus for program orientation, comprehensive exams, and dissertation defense.

Program Orientation

The initial three-day campus visit has been valuable in setting the stage for library support for the first two cohorts. Librarians are invited to participate in both formal and informal events, such as the faculty-student mixer. Near the end of the campus visit, after students have created accounts and practiced with some of the tools that they will be using (email, Google Hangouts, Google Drive, and the Canvas learning management system), librarians are given time for a workshop. For this session, kinesiology faculty have emphasized the need for an introduction to library services, face to face contact with multiple librarians, and a review of basic literature searching skills.

During the first summer, the librarians had an hour for small

group discussions led by the Distance Education Librarian, the Health Sciences Librarian, and the Data Services Librarian. After this orientation, many of the 18 participants requested more time with the library resources, so in the summer 2015 workshop we provided a longer session with hands-on activities. We spent more time on keyword searching in SPORTDiscus, Boolean search commands, and results management. I had planned to demonstrate catalog searching for ebooks, but the students were very engaged, so I followed their lead and referred to my handout and library tutorials for topics that we didn't have time to cover. The Data Services Librarian highlighted several publicly available data sets, focusing on the Interuniversity Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). She also emphasized the need for data management in their own future research projects. Many of the 20 participants provided feedback. They praised the library introduction, especially data services, as well as research databases in general and features such as permalinks. Most suggestions for improvement were requests for more library content during the campus visit, such as multiple sessions. Most participants felt that the content met their needs, but two felt that the workshop was too basic, and another asked that citation

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Kinesiology continued

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management software be included in future library orientations.

Webinars

With the support of the program director, I have provided follow up webinars using Blackboard Collaborate. I use Google Form polls to ask students about schedule preferences, research interests and barriers encountered in finding or managing sources. Based on these responses and on information from instructors, I have introduced additional resources including PubMed, ProQuest Dissertations and Theses Global, a brief look at SPIN for funding opportunities, Google Scholar, and Zotero for citation management. Many of my webinars have lasted from 45 – 60 minutes, but I've started scheduling briefer sessions. Students really appreciate that. I try to boost attendance by offering workshops to large groups (several classes or both cohorts). Usually I give participants a "one minute paper" style survey, with questions such as: What was the most useful thing that you learned? Any suggestions about this session? Future topics? I don't always get this kind of feedback, but responses to the planning and feedback polls are still useful additions to the kind of input that I get when students reach out to me individually for help.

Student and Faculty Support

The majority of student questions arrive through email, usually requests for basic help such as getting article full text, getting print books delivered, and additional ways to get sources into Zotero. I sometimes meet with students by phone or in a Google Hangout. For several exciting months, I monitored an ongoing discussion in Google Hangouts where students posted questions to each other and sometimes to me.

Faculty requests sometimes involve similar topics. More often, faculty questions focus on course preparation: e-reserves, copyright concerns, tutorial updates, suggestions for identifying readings, etc. While our collection includes many of the key journals listed by the American Kinesiology Association (2015), faculty have requested some additional subscriptions, so

I have advocated for those additions.

This semester I was invited to become embedded in several courses. I am engaging in a range of activities. I updated library-related content in Canvas and made a few additions (setting up a PICO statement, brief notes about SPORTDiscus vs PubMed vs ERIC, and so forth). I have posted weekly announcements with library news and office hour details. Sometimes I post responses to trending questions such as APA style citations or finding dissertations. So far I've provided one webinar targeting content useful for both classes: advice and discussion on choosing search terms, where to search, and keeping track of searches and results. One of the nine participants responded to the "one minute paper" style poll that I sent, indicating that PICO was the most useful topic, and s/he would have liked an introduction to the Gale Virtual Library online encyclopedias. My follow up post in Canvas included suggestions for background sources. This kind of course participation is giving me a much better understanding of student interests and some of the work that they are doing.

Planning has begun for supporting the next cohort of online KIN EdD students. I feel like I have good opportunities to connect with the current students and I look forward to meeting the new group. I'm grateful that I'm not limited to sending messages in a bottle, with no idea of the impact of my work or cues for further development.

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