

It's All the in the Details: Doctoral Students' Experiences with the Compulsory Transition to Online Learning

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ABSTRACT

This study reports the findings of survey research designed to understand perceptions of EdD students moving from a hybrid cohort model into a compulsory online experience due to COVID-19. The study was conducted in an educational leadership doctoral program, traditionally offered in a hybrid format, but forced to transition to online delivery as a result of the global pandemic. Respondents included students at three stages of program enrollment at the point of transition: (1) “all but dissertation”(2) mid-point, and (3) new recruits. Overall findings indicate that although a majority of respondents indicated preference for face-to-face classes, the switch to online learning was well-received, primarily as a result of perceptions of quick and supportive communication from doctoral program leadership, strong student and instructor connections, and high-quality collaborative opportunities. The results offer practical implications for programs exploring options to transition to online delivery.