The pleasures and practicalities of supporting HDRs online
Supporting research candidates online

Outline

• The CSU context
• Online initiatives to support HDR writing
• Reflections on online community-building for writing
External HDR candidates 2013

Source: DEEWR uCube
Online initiatives to support HDR writing

1. Online workshops

- Combined research training calendar for HDRs, supervisors, ECRs
- Writing workshops include: Structuring a lit review, Getting the feedback you need, Developing your voice, Critical writing, etc.
- 2014 up to the end of September:
  - 31 of 47 (66%) writing workshops have been online
  - 441 of 550 (80%) workshop attendances at online ones
Evaluating others' work, entering a debate, considering alternatives
- at least 2 positions, including yours

Taking a position, making a claim, developing an argument

Re-organising information:
applying models to data, comparing, finding patterns & categories

Providing information & facts

Critical

Persuasive

Analytical

Descriptive
Online initiatives to support HDR writing

2. Online writing groups

• 2014 so far
  • 95 of 113 (84%) writing groups have been online or hybrid
  • 560 / 655 (85%) writing group attendances at online/hybrid events
  • 3 main types of writing groups...
Online initiatives to support HDR writing

2. Online writing groups

A. Shut Up & Write
   • 5 x weekly online (central)
   • Hosting shared with regulars
   • Devotees spread the dandelion seeds...
Online initiatives to support HDR writing

2. Online writing groups

B. Bootcamps

• Hybrid mode – both F2F in Wagga and online in Adobe Connect
• Declared individual goals, tracking & celebrating progress
• Very popular – currently monthly
• Mix of staff, HDRs & others
Online initiatives to support HDR writing

2. Online writing groups

C. Peer feedback writing circles
   • Both hybrid & purely online
   • Mixed discipline & discipline specific
   • Negotiated and evolving format & modes
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3. Individual consultations online

- Adobe Connect or Skype
- The usual topics: writing & planning processes, research genres and registers, the feedback cycle with supervisors, etc.
- Uptake by both external and on-campus HDRs
- Albury, Adelaide, U.S.A., Canada, Jordan, Switzerland...
Online initiatives to support HDR writing

4. Asynchronous resources
Online initiatives to support HDR writing

5. *Docfest* – Piloted in 2014

- 3 day event for research student professional development
- 3 faculties: Arts, Education & Business
- Hybrid mode: F2F and online – both presenters & participants
- Writing and other topics for HDR development, e.g.

  - *Architecture of the thesis, Mindfulness, Protect your intellectual property, Sustainability in research, Looking after your supervisor*, etc.
PROTECT MY RESEARCH

Intellectual Property

Disseminating research progress

1. Website
2. Professional learning seminars
3. Publications: Report
4. Conference presentations
#csudocfest Report Jun 2014

560 tweets

**General statistics**

- **560 tweets**
  - 32.39% Original tweets (184)
  - 5.63% Replies (32)
  - 45.25% Retweets (257)
  - 16.73% Links & pics (95)

- **1,805,254 Impacts**
- **2,156 Followers per contributor**
- **5.14 Tweets per contributor**
- **234,980 Reach**
- **109 Contributors**
- **95 Links & pictures**

© Activity
Reflections on community-building
Reflections on community-building

Where is the ‘home’ of community-building?

- Who ‘owns’ community-building? Is it being sustained?
- Writing support without a community-building component
  - e.g. central workshops, individual consultations
- Writing support for an existing community
  - e.g. star supervisors or research centres/networks, professional doctorate coursework
- What about building/nurturing community from scratch?
  - At ‘home’ in central/faculty research administration?
  - ‘Pop-up’ collaborations across boundaries
Reflections on community-building

Strengths & vulnerabilities of a pop-up approach

- Distributed, jointly constructed expertise vs single-centre
- Safe fuzzy space for elastic identities
- Liminal space & corridor conversations (e.g. Iedema et al., 2006)
- Unexpected treasures

Docfest gave me so much highly relevant information and opened my eyes, changing my perception of the uni and the research process as isolated, faceless and fraught with difficulties. I now have a perspective of the uni as bristling with relevant resources and having a suite of helpful people who can direct me and assist me, whatever my needs and stage of candidature.
Reflections on community-building

Strengths & vulnerabilities of a pop-up approach

• Infrastructure & resources: rooms, microphones, teabags
• Advocacy, sponsorship & voice for community-building
• Continuity of initiatives outside staff ‘core business’
• Community-building as ‘core-business’ ...  ?
We would love to hear from you 😊

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