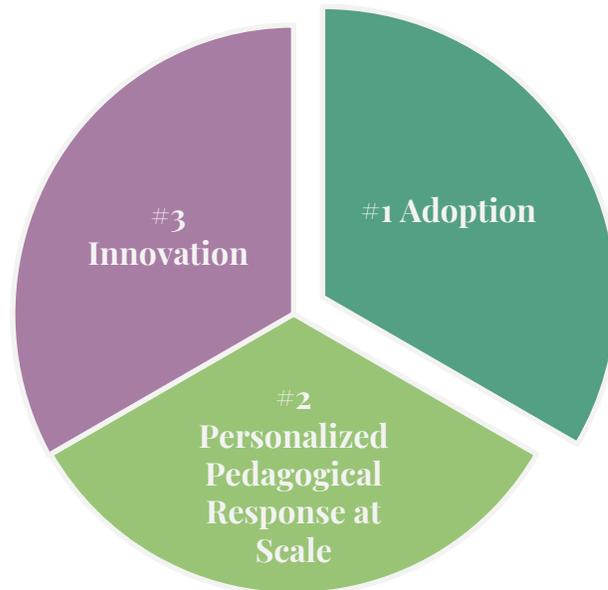


## DNPD Evaluation

### Variables: Adoption, Pedagogical Responsiveness, Innovation



#### Not JUST a University Website with Webinars and Marketing

We take to heart what VP Michael Benedik, Chief International Officer of Texas A&M University, said about the challenges in higher ed today, "what counts is being able to deliver great services to a wider range of students, some without social or financial capital, and to do that at scale." To that end, in order to meet the challenge of our mission, to help universities improve graduate retention and completion, we have built, and we do research on, a three pronged approach.

#### Adoption

Aggregate adoption figures for 2018-2019 school year (n=5.4K unique users) demonstrate an average of 11% adoption per university population, across mostly first year implementations. Universities who were partners multiple years saw increases year to year on average of 3.5%.



Webinars continue to be the most common entry point for adoptions, with right at 6500 hours of webinar materials requested.

The top three topics for webinar adoption were academic writing (3743 adoptions), thesis and proposal design (1325 adoptions), and critical thinking, reading, design and analysis, (941, adoptions). The full chart of adoptions by tags is shown in Figure 1 below.

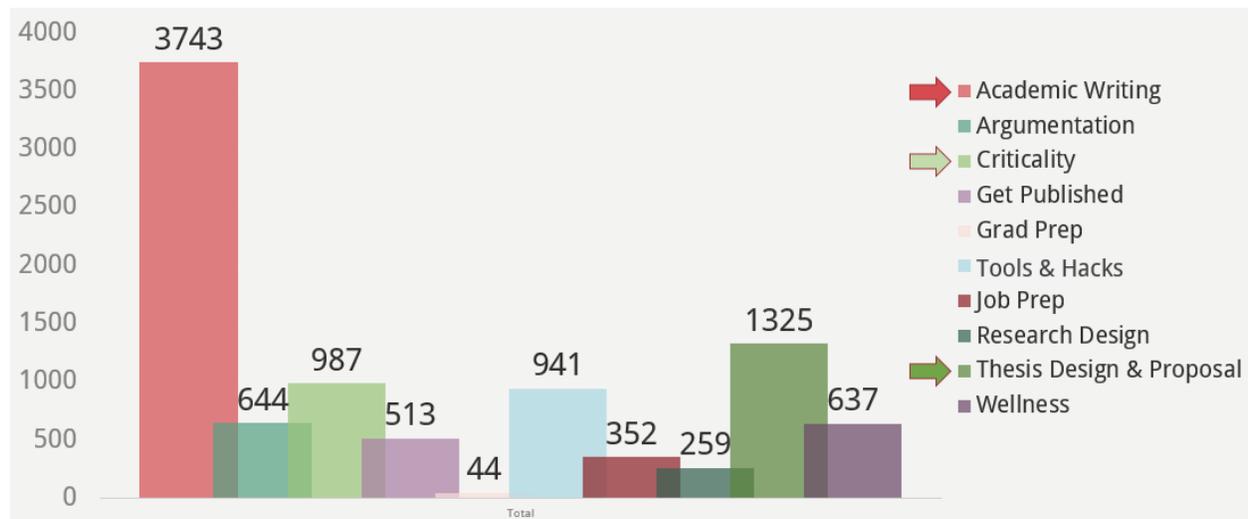


Figure 1: Adoptions by topic area

Frequently students explore multiple online delivery systems for materials. Adoptions by delivery include:

1. Experiences (30-day challenges, weekly topical emails, writing boosts, etc) were adopted by 2501 students
2. From Jan – May 2019, 660 unique students visited their university portals 1K times, investigating 4K pages, averaging over 15 minutes on the site.
3. Boxed sets of materials on a particular subject such as academic writing or research design were delivered 178 times.
4. Students participated in 411 hours in online groups.



## Developing Personalized Pedagogical Responsiveness at Scale...

How to develop support that is both personalized to the student AND at scale is a task no one has a complete answer for, yet. Three things are in progress.

FIRST - Available by request is the complete report on fall 2019 successful experiment with anonymous questioning prior to webinars. The system is that with about 65% of our webinars and groups the students have been given a url to which they can respond with specific questions they have or to answer a generic question from us. As an example for a webinar that was geared towards helping them keep a positive mindset we asked what things about graduate school made them nervous? For a webinar on academic writing we asked what the hardest part of academic writing was for them?

We address most, if not all questions during the webinar and they are fodder for those attending live to ask others. Every two months we answer all the wooclaps and send them on as part of the monthly newsletter so that other students can see what is asked by other students and what resources we recommend should their questions and experience be better.

AS a recent addition we are encouraged by both the response rate (150 questions were lodged) and by the effect it has had on the webinars reaching out to students. Their response in the webinars are changing and it appears the numbers attending live are going up but it is too early to have statistics yet that back that up.

SECOND - in order to begin to measure whether our resources are meeting the demands of our mission we started (and continue) to encourage students who come to webinar experiences to rate their experience. There is almost a 1:1 correspondence between their answers to the question of whether they were satisfied by the webinar and whether they feel the information will help their graduate work proceed more easily. Figure 2 are those results. Respondent rate was low - 158 out of 6354 registrations.

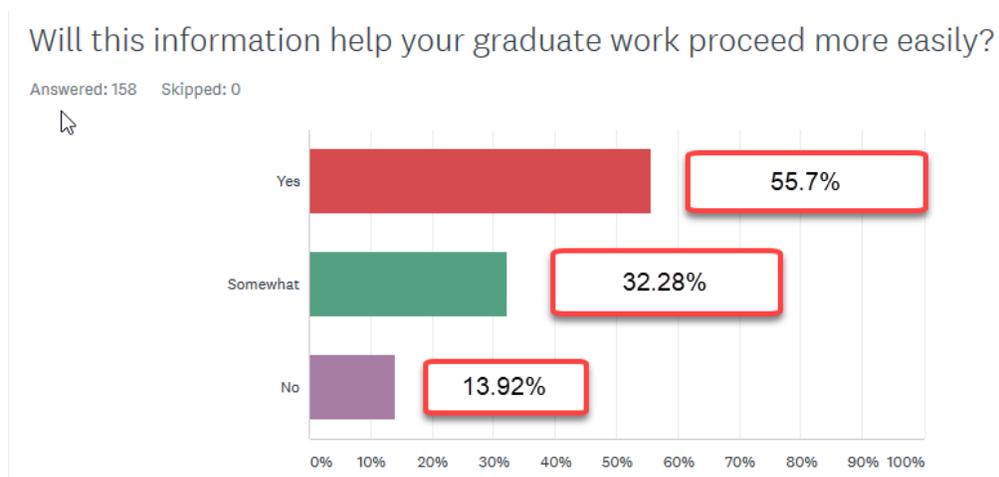
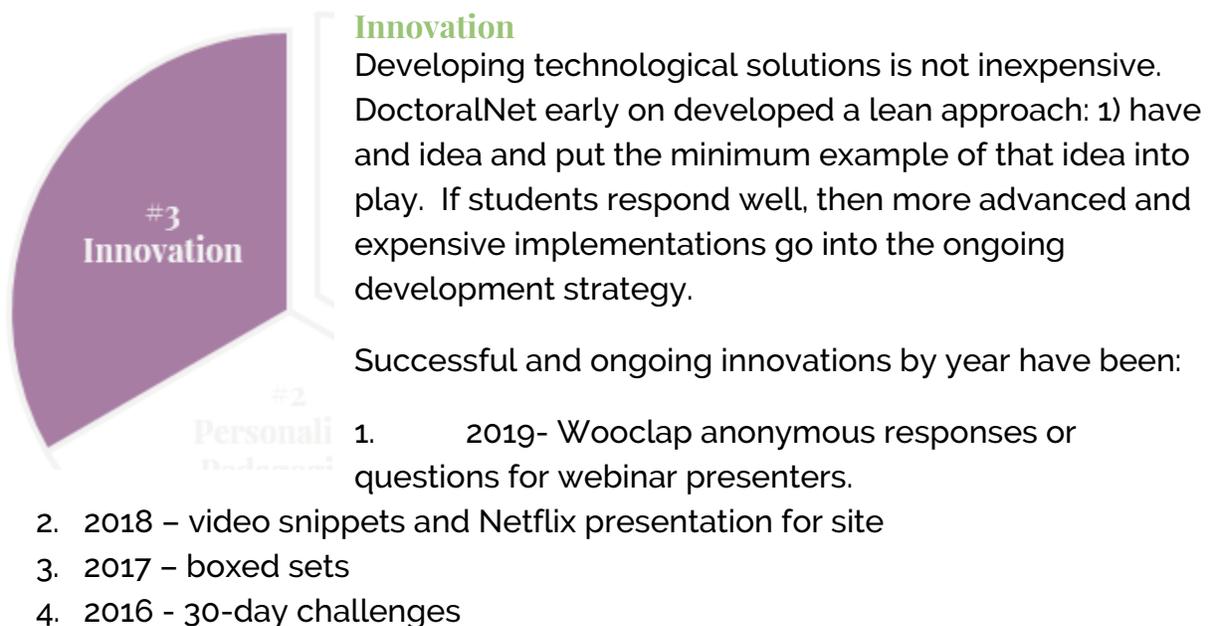


Figure 2: Satisfaction levels as to helpfulness towards graduation

THIRD Our groups have been successful. Some are drop in but focused on areas known to slow students down, others are over several weeks and focused on a particular issue – such as dissertation or thesis design. As an example in January 2020 we are running 5 consecutive weeks of a group focused on the 5 chapter dissertation – what goes where and we'll be answering questions as well as presenting comparative practices from finished works in several fields.

Backing up this work is the Search by Phases menu on each university site that breaks down the common major milestone deliverables into minor milestone steps – allowing students to track progress over the long haul of independent research.



**#3 Innovation**

**Innovation**  
Developing technological solutions is not inexpensive. DoctoralNet early on developed a lean approach: 1) have an idea and put the minimum example of that idea into play. If students respond well, then more advanced and expensive implementations go into the ongoing development strategy.

Successful and ongoing innovations by year have been:

1. 2019- Wooclap anonymous responses or questions for webinar presenters.
2. 2018 – video snippets and Netflix presentation for site
3. 2017 – boxed sets
4. 2016 - 30-day challenges