

Learner Support in Open Distance and E-Learning Context through Teaching Presence of Community of Inquiry Model

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ABSTRACT The recent global growth and popularity of Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has been attributed to its advantages, such as flexibility for students who wish to study while working. Moreover, ODL is an effective tool in extending participation to students from less privileged social groups who are unreachable due to their geographic location or cannot access higher education because of diverse factors, such as financial constraints or domestic arrangements. In the light of this, this paper investigated learner support in the Department of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) at the University of South Africa (Unisa), the largest dedicated ODL institution in South Africa. A review of the literature identified the Community of Inquiry model is useful in this context, and it was used as a conceptual framework for the empirical inquiry. A quantitative research approach was employed to investigate the research questions.