This journal exists both to inform and inspire. These abstracts are summaries of dissertations that represent years of accumulated knowledge and effort by the students who author them, standing as monuments of individual learning and scholarship. These abstracts exist also as a result of the contributions and support of the authors’ families, teachers, friends, communities and study volunteers. The authors' appreciation is often reflected in their dedications and acknowledgements, which can be as inspirational as the abstracts themselves.

Many readers of this journal have written to the SAS requesting copies of the full dissertations represented here. Our department does not distribute copies of the dissertations, but they will eventually appear on ProQuest. It takes approximately 90 days for ProQuest to process the dissertation — so if the dissertation is not already there, search in ProQuest every month or so and eventually it should appear.

Congratulations to those represented here who have completed their doctoral journey, and may they guide the way for those who seek to follow.

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If you would like your dissertation posted in the Dissertation Abstract Journal, please email your request to: Jacob.Harris@phoenix.edu
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Dissertation Title: EXPLORING MARKETING'S LOSS OF INFLUENCE TO LEAD CHANGE AND IMPROVE PERFORMANCE: A QUALITATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Abstract
The current qualitative study using a phenomenological approach explored a loss of marketing influence to lead organizational change and its implementation to improve the performance of selected companies operating in health care, health insurance, medical equipment, real estate, and banking and finance markets in South Florida. Limited information is currently available about marketing influence within firms. Two research studies a decade apart focused on marketing influence within firms turned out significant disagreements pertaining to marketing influence and the loss of marketing leadership image and influence within researched firms. In this study, face to face semi-structured audiotaped interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of 15 managers from diverse functions. Journal entries documented the data that could not be recorded. The research was conducted and analyzed over a 6-month period. Nvivo 9 qualitative analysis software was used to develop codes, categories, and themes from interviews and nine open-ended questions from a survey. The primary themes that emerged from the study were marketing loss of leadership was a threat to organizational reputation and sustainability, evidence of marketing value contribution to measure accountability to profitability, marketing leadership, credibility, and respect across functions and from senior management, the value of change, consumer oriented culture, and customer satisfaction. Major recommendations for future research included expanding the sample incorporating consumer packaged-goods and information technology firms. Research possible qualitative metrics for marketing performance and assess non-financial metrics to measure marketing creativity contribution. Narrow the scholarly-practice gap and determine the source of lateral influence of marketing leadership.

Dedication
I dedicate this dissertation to my loving wife and perennial friend Gladys AKA Mami. There were many times when I felt overwhelmed and lost sight of the finish line and Mami resurrected my drive with pampering love and the encouraging valor of the souls that never quit. I could never compensate for the waiting period and the social isolation during those four years that Gladys rewarded me with a great deal of patience emotional support, and guilt-free engagement. She stood by me in those difficult tough days, weeks, and years to ensure I completed my journey. This doctoral degree is a paid tribute to Gladys; I could not have completed this doctoral program without her, she was always there for me. For that and much more, my wife owns my love and she has my everlasting respect, admiration, and gratitude.

I would like also to dedicate this doctoral degree in loving memory to my uncle George Cespedes and to my dear aunt Fidias Cespedes from whom I received parental unconditional love, guidance, support, and encouragement to pursue academic goals. The only regret I feel is the personal absence of my uncle George at the finish line. This journey meant a lot to my uncle and aunt. I could not leave this dedication page without recognizing my grandmother Gregoria Orozco Charris, who encouraged my grasp for the stars and my cousin Helen Cespedes who reminded me of the family pride and to never give up in the face of a challenge. A special dedication of this research study goes to my son Alexander and granddaughter Alexandria who represent the future in my family.

Acknowledgements
This dissertation would not be possible without the unending support and mentoring of my committee members. I thank Dr. Johnny Morris my mentor who understood the nature of the study and helped me to shift research method and design after having written already three chapters under another mentor. My trust was rewarded. I am grateful to Dr. Morris for his words of support, advice, and staying with me during this time, which seemed like a long process. I sincerely thank Dr. Prakash Sathe for insightful recommendations, which made me cautious in my data analysis and interpretations. Special thanks to Dr. William July who provided the motivation needed to persist and helped me to treat obstacles as normal events with a deadline. I am indebted to my committee for helping me to keep my eyes on the prize.
Dr. Charla Harmon a Phoenix graduate and a friend deserves a special acknowledgement for her unselfish engagement and caring attitude during the times of the proposal process. Dr. Harmon encouragement, enthusiasm, and voluntary assistance in interpreting the rules of engagement helped to achieve a successful proposal. Thank you Dr. Charla. I thank Dr. Duane Kujawa for a lifetime encouragement through undergraduate and graduate school and Dr. Victor Wallen for motivating me into pursuing a doctoral degree. Both made them sound easy to follow in their food steps. Thank you, I am happy I did.

Dan Santangelo  
Dissertation Title A PHENOMENOLOGICAL INQUIRY INTO THE FINANCIAL EDUCATION EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG, LOW-INCOME CREDIT UNION MEMBERS

Abstract  
This qualitative phenomenological study engaged 20 young, low-income credit union members who participated in financial education classes at Denver Community Credit Union. The study explored learning experiences that generated changes in money management behaviors and sought evidence of transformational learning in a nonformal education setting. Themes from participants' interview answers appear under three core themes and seventeen sub-themes. Core theme 1: Indicators of money-management behaviors: five sub-themes included: examine and plan savings habits, track spending habits and rethink before buying, learn how credit works, learn how to pay off credit, and avoid adding new credit. Core theme 2: Steps in transformational learning: six sub-themes included: experienced dilemmas resulting from high debt and low income, accomplishment via experiencing improved money management habits, inform, write about, and discuss money issues, identify irresponsible and out of control financial habits, become confident and self-accountable, and positioned to lead others. Core theme 3: Perceived transformational learning: six sub-themes included improved self-awareness and financial control, experienced dilemmas resulting from loss of income and high debt, experienced discontent with lack of knowledge, experienced discontent with unclear goals, experienced discontent with unmanaged credit, and plan spending, budget, and then act. Young, low-income credit union members changed their money management behaviors and experienced transformational learning as a result of their financial education experience at Denver Community Credit Union. A set of teaching/learning sequences are proposed and explained.

Dedication  
This dissertation is dedicated to my four wonderful grandchildren. To Sierra, my eldest grandchild, whose inquisitive mind and practical view of life have kept me focused on this work. Her uncanny ability to see through to the truth keeps me always in wonder of her mind and spirit. To Anthony, my eldest grandson, whose kind and caring nature continually reminds me of the better nature of man and that compassion is truly a part of our family. To Alano, my most cherished middle grandson, whose loving nature and determined point of view kept me inspired always to look toward the future. To Dominick, my baby, whose bright and cheery disposition has kept me balanced and forward looking through this journey. Without his bright smile, this process could have been much more difficult. My grandchildren are my reason for pushing forward and my inspiration for forging new knowledge.

Acknowledgements  
My dissertation was shaped and honed by my mentor Richard Bothel, Ed.D. His practical approach and dedication created an environment that fostered learning and emphasized the scholarly process. Robert Hoel, Ph.D., stayed committed to my learning process and never spoke a discouraging word. Robert always had time to answer my questions and help direct my journey even when his own schedule was daunting. The last member of my committee, Michael Daniels, Ph.D., remained dedicated to my learning process and helped me answer some of the most challenging questions about my journey. Without these three men, my learning experience would have been incomplete.

Many helped me along the way, but I owe a special debt to Helen Gibson and Amy Fidelis, financial educators at Denver Community Credit Union. Both Helen and Amy were always available, and both remained dedicated to the process even when it seemed like it would never end. Two others who helped along the way include Donna Gibbs, whose endless willingness and hard work made this study possible, and Nancy Whitsel, whose hard work and dedication to the process made the whole process run smoothly.

Gail D. Fuller  
Dissertation Title A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF BURNS BETWEEN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN CONTRACTORS IN CONTINGENCY COMBAT OPERATIONS

Abstract  
The purpose of the quantitative comparative study was to compare the severity and causes of burns suffered by U.S. military personnel and civilian contractors in the war zone. While the threat associated with war operations affects both
service personnel and contractors, contractors may not have the same access to the advanced protective gear and sufficient medical care as military groups. In the study, the researcher compared the causes and severity of burns suffered by soldiers and civilians in the war zone. Data composed of archival data pertaining to demographic characteristics of burn victims as well as the causes of burn, types of injury, and severity of the burn injuries served as one source of data. The second source of data involved three different questionnaires administered to civilian contractors, military personnel, and health professionals who treated the injured soldiers. Based on the results, the null hypothesis positing no difference in the severity of burns suffered by civilians and soldiers injured in combat operations was accepted. The null hypothesis positing no significant difference in the causes of burn injuries suffered by the same two groups resulted in rejection. Recommendations included improved orientations to both civilians and soldiers on the use of protective gear and further research on innovative improvements in protective gear to match the advances in armaments and explosives in warfare. A further recommendation is for greater communication regarding the sharing of resources involving protective gear and medical services for both civilians and soldiers supporting an armed conflict.

Dedication
I dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends--to my husband, Patrick Fuller, and children, Nakeisha Vance, Xavier Vance, Miracle Fuller, and Shalee Fuller. Your unending love, support, and encouragement in completing this dissertation made this degree possible. Countless hours and nights without sleep were required to meet all my duties as a wife, mother, and soldier serving my country.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my beloved father who passed away before the completion of my degree, but who stood by me from the beginning of this course and until the day the Lord called him home on August 6, 2010. My mother, whom I love very much, Ms. Maggie Sue Payton, kept encouraging me to complete this dissertation process. The complete confidence they have shown in me from the beginning of my life allowed me to believe that I could accomplish anything I set out to do. I love you!

Acknowledgements
First, I would like to give honor and thanks to God for making the completion of this project possible. To God is the glory! This dissertation could not have been completed without God, my family, friends, colleagues, and mentors. I am deeply grateful to all of the soldiers, contractors, and healthcare professionals who participated in the study. I would like to take a moment of silence and send a special prayer for all of the soldiers and contractors who did not make it back from overseas.

I am also enormously grateful to Dr. Sushil Jindal, my friend and mentor, for helping me get this project off the ground, for guiding me through incredibly challenging clinical work, and for inspiring me to reach for excellence. Dr. Jindal, without your encouragement, I do not believe I would be this far. I truly thank you more than you will ever know. I would also like to express my sincere gratitude to the members of my doctoral committee, Dr. Ruth Grendell and Dr. Janice Emanuel-Bunn, for believing in me and providing their expertise.

I would like to give all my love to my family and friends for believing in me and always being there for me, even when I did not want to talk about it! All of their love, laughter, hugs, and smiles carried me through the times when I did not think I could continue on my own.

Finally, I would like to thank the staff of the Force Management Section for allowing me to discuss my concerns about my study with them as they provided me with advice and friendship. I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Jeanette Shutay, Dr. Norma Turner and Dr. Linda Idleman, who shared their expertise and exceptional knowledge throughout this project. I do believe I may have never finished this project without my family and friends. To all of the people who have been a part of my life as I have struggled for this degree, thank you for your patience and for never giving up on me.

Kerrie Lynn Raines
Dissertation Title TEACHER RESISTANCE TO THE RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION PROCESS: A DELPHI STUDY

Abstract
There has been a growing concern amongst educational stakeholders concerning the over identification of students with specific learning disabilities. The reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education improvement ACT in 2004 launched a response to intervention (RTI) process mandated early interventions for struggling students before a referring a student for special education. The RTI initiative changes the roles of educators work together in supporting students' academic success in schools. Education leaders across the nation are experiencing challenges in implementing RTI. One of these challenges of implementing a successful RTI model is teacher resistance. The purpose of this study was to investigate the causes of teacher resistance to the RTI process by assembling an expert panel using a modified Delphi method. The expert panelists in this study were general and special education teachers, school psychologists, school administrators, university faculty, and state department of education staff located in the southwest region of Idaho. The
modified Delphi method utilized an internet based survey tool to ensure confidentiality and time constraints of participants. Results of the qualitative study with a modified Delphi method provided informative data regarding the causes of teacher resistance to the RTI process in three rounds. Consensus occurred among panelists in several areas including professional development and leadership skills. Panelists in the study also provided recommendations for education leaders to prevent future resistances to the RTI process.

Dedication
This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Wade, my daughters Melissa, Amanda, Morgannne, my parents Eli and Louise Macom, and my brothers Ron and Tom Macom. Wade, who is the love of my life, has supported and stood by me while earning this degree. His dedication to our family and his deep conviction for lifelong learning has been a guiding force helping me to overcome all the challenges I have met in my personal life, professional life, and the pursuit of this degree.

My children, Melissa, Amanda, and Morgannne are the best cheerleaders any parent could ever imagine. Their love and dedication to their father and I have been one of the most important driving forces in all my accomplishments. I hope I have been an inspiration to my children as much as they have been to me—Melissa, who has graduated with her B. S. in psychology this year, Amanda who has graduated from high school this year with aspirations of attending medical school, and Morganne who is in middle school.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my parents, Eli and Louise Macom, and my brothers, Ron and Tom Macom. My parents, Eli and Louise, believe and encouraged their children to further their education throughout their lives. I am blessed with the selfless devotion of my parents. Through their dedication to their children, they gave of themselves unselfishly to move to Idaho to help care for my family as I furthered my educational goals. My brothers, Ron and Tom Macom, for whom I love and admire their dedication to both their families and extended families, I thank you for standing by me my whole life.

Acknowledgements
There are numerous participants in the efforts of completing a dissertation that need to be acknowledged. I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation for the support of all participants. First, I would like to first thank my mentor, Dr. Lori Wynia, for her patience and encouragement during this journey. Her ability to encourage me to challenge my own thought processes, and her outstanding leadership ability consistently improved the study. I also want to thank my committee members, Dr. Terese Kanai and Dr. Terry Howard, for their support and recommendations on how to improve the subject matter discussion and organization.

I want to express my gratitude and appreciation to my classmates Audrey Lorea, Duane Hazelton, Marlene Jackson, and Kimberly Morgan. We started our doctoral program together, which formed a bond of trust, encouragement, and dedication that helped us to overcome all challenges in the completion of our dissertations. I am honored by lifelong friendships and commitment to learning for each other.

My sincere gratitude is expressed for my colleagues and the rest of the staff at the Base Primary School for their encouragement and consistent support. They have been persistent in helping me to stay on track during my educational journey. I am honored to work with a dedicated team of educators who believe learning is a lifelong gift for everyone.

Caryn S. Trapp
Dissertation Title THE ASSOCIATION AMONG EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, RESILIENCE, AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRESERVICE TEACHERS

Abstract
New teachers often struggle with handling their students and their many responsibilities because of demanding nature of the job. A strong preservice preparation is critical to teachers’ success and increases teacher retention in the profession. This quantitative study examined the association among emotional intelligence, as measured by the Emotional Skills Assessment Process (ESAP), resilience, as measured by the Resilience Scale, grade point average, and Praxis I scores of three different groups of teacher candidates at a state university in western Pennsylvania. A total of 118 teacher candidate participated in the study. The results revealed significant differences in emotional intelligence scores of participants across the three groups. The difference was attributed to leadership, change orientation, and self-esteem scores. Furthermore, the correlation between emotional intelligence scores and resilience was significant. Recommendations included the development of a systematic process to help the preservice teacher candidates enhance their emotional skills and learn how to manage the problem areas as indicated in the ESAP.

Dedication
To Frank A. Pugliese, Ph. D., my late husband. Frank provided me with so much in our short time together.
Acknowledgements
Obviously this journey would not be possible without the blessing of a strong support system of family and friends. God has given me two wonderful daughters, Amanda Marie and Kristen Anne Yetter; two strong women who have shaped me into the person I am today. In addition, I am grateful for my mother, Joyce E. Trapp, who never stopped asking me when I was going to finish this degree, especially after I promised my father I would finish the journey this time. Although my dad, Allan L. Trapp, DVM, Ph.D, died before I finished my dissertation, I know he always believed I would finish.

My friends and colleagues, especially Drs. Nikki Merchant and Susan Argyle, have always been willing to listen, console, and the redirect me back on the path. My secretary, Kay Castor, has been an angel. Her support provided the spiritually element that I needed to recover from personal setbacks along the path. Drs. Darwin Nelson and Gary Low never stopped encouraging me to continue despite the challenges and obstacles that peppered the pathway. My former students provided the incentive to complete my research to influence other future teachers.

Finally, words cannot express my appreciation to my mentor and committee members. Dr. Dallas Taylor, you never gave up on me despite the length of this journey. I had the pleasure of being in Dr. Avis Kunz online class many years ago, and am indebted to you in terms of what you have taught me about education, learning, and life in general. Both Drs. Taylor and Kunz have been with me throughout the dissertation process, but I am truly grateful for Dr. Barbara Trent, who came in when I needed someone to fill a vacancy after my proposal was approved. I am forever changed by everyone who has crossed my path on this journey.

Nakia M. Thompson
Dissertation Title A STUDY OF WEB-BASED FAMILY MEDICINE MALPRACTICE LAW OF EASTERN REGION OF THE UNITED STATES

Abstract
Cybermedicine combines medicine and the use of the Internet. Physicians’ ability to treat patients beyond traditional means has expanded drastically as a result of the advent of the Internet. Cyberspace, combined with healthcare, has benefits and disadvantages. Among the disadvantages are liability, negligence, and the possibility for medical malpractice. Twenty states were studied in this research. This qualitative case study dealt with cybermedicine and medical malpractice. Typically, each state handles malpractice matters; however, once care crosses state lines, there is no superseding jurisdictional premise. Moreover, the study’s details revealed the lack of clarity regarding what happens when the healthcare efforts extend beyond state borders. Recommendations included establishing regulations that provide clear and concise policies regarding cybermedicine family medicine medical practice.

Dedication
This dissertation is dedicated to my wife, Erika, and my children, Jordan and Christopher, and my parents. My family has supported me tirelessly in my efforts to achieve this goal. They sacrificed many days and nights without me so that I could accomplish this goal and complete this dissertation. Thank you to my family and friends who have been very encouraging and supportive. I love you all. Thank you very much.

Acknowledgements
Many people are so deserving of praise and thanks for being encouraging and compassionate during this journey. First and foremost, I would like to thank my mentor, Dr. Mulder. Dr. Mulder has been one of my biggest cheerleaders and a cornerstone of support. Dr. Mulder believed I could complete this dissertation even when I did not think I could. Next, I would like to thank my committee, Dr. Wise and Dr. Crowe. My committee has been very thorough in the dissertation process. My committee provided great advice and inspiration.

Fredrick Douglass once said, “Without struggle there can be no progress.” I would like to acknowledge my brother, Jamie and my sister, Tamika, and all of the people I have come to know over the last several years; new friends, past and present colleagues, and University of Phoenix cohorts who have pushed me to continue forward and not give up. For all of the people I have met along this journey who have assisted me, thank you.

LeToyer McFadden
Dissertation Title PERCEPTIONS OF SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE TESTING ON ACADEMIC PROGRESS OF AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDENTS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Abstract
The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to analyze archival data and interview responses to determine the perceptions of individuals regarding SAT requirements and their effect on the academic progress of African American
students beyond high school. Each student participant had taken the SAT at least once prior to participating in the study. The high school administrators and faculty members had at least one full year of experience with the school system to be eligible for participation. The findings of the study revealed perceptions regarding in-depth preparation and higher scores on the SAT. The lived experiences of the participants produced a variety of invariant constituents which assisted in the identification and exploration of the role of the SAT in the academic progress of African American students. The school system could benefit from this research study in that the district could assist in creating a collaborative effort to maximize each high school student’s academic potential as he or she prepares to enter institutions of higher learning. The district may also assist in narrowing the testing achievement gap that exists between Caucasians and African Americans.

Dedication
I dedicate this work to my son Zion. It was because of you that I began this journey to complete my education. Thank you for being a wonderful, understanding son throughout the years. I especially appreciate you waking me up when I fell asleep at my computer trying to complete my work (smile). Obstacles may arise in your life causing you to feel like you cannot accomplish your goals, but during those times, I want you to remember that you can do all things through Christ! I love you!

Acknowledgements
I am honored to acknowledge one of the most supportive, patient and outstanding individuals I have had the opportunity to work with. Dr. John Peed, you have been a phenomenal mentor to me throughout the years. I appreciate the dedication you have displayed in helping me to complete this program. I would have never made it through this journey without your guidance, knowledge, and support. May God continue to bless you in all that you do!

This experience was also enlightened by the tireless contributions of my wonderful committee members. Dr. Anne Bowers Jr., and Dr. Peggy Irwin, thank you so much for your support and incredible responsiveness. I am very grateful to you for all you have done to assist me in the completion of my doctoral journey.

I want to acknowledge my family who supported and encouraged me to press on when the road became very rough. Thank you for not allowing me to give up on my lifelong dream. A special thank you goes to my parents, Richard and Ruby, for babysitting my son when I needed additional time late into the night and on weekends to complete my assignments. I will forever be grateful to the sacrifices you made to help me accomplish my goal. I love you guys!

I am also very grateful to each individual who agreed to participate in this research study. Your ability to share your personal experiences to improve the pathway for others who follow you is greatly appreciated. I wish every student the best of luck as you strive to complete your educational goals. I also encourage the educators to continue their outstanding efforts in ensuring students are prepared for college level work.

Javier Sergio Pedroza
Dissertation Title FAMILISMO (FAMILISM) AND SOCIAL IDENTITY THEORY: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF LATINO TENURED PROFESSORS

Abstract
The persistent underrepresentation of Latino tenured professors in the United States prompted this qualitative phenomenological exploration of the influence of familismo and social identity theory applications on the academic success of Latino scholars. Mentorship, leadership, and self-efficacy sub-constructs complemented familismo and social identity theory critical to the investigation. A sample group comprised of nine Latina and Latino full professors at a major research university in the Southwestern United States participated in this study. A simplified version of Groenewald’s (2004) five-step explicitation process supplanted conventional data analysis methods. Five central themes emerged from the findings: (a) support at home; (b) battling negative stereotypes; (c) connecting with students; (d) sense of service; and (e) confidence in ability. The findings could enlighten educators, policy makers, community and business leaders, and government agencies in adopting effective, culturally-relevant initiatives aimed at strengthening academic attainment in the nation's largest ethnic minority and least educated group—Latinos. Academic success in the Latino community continues to be vital to the future of the United States.

Dedication
I dedicate this dissertation to mi familia. I will be forever grateful and humbled for the fortune of having as my wife, Yolanda; our children Dolores Delfina, René Sergio, and Davian Javier; and our granddaughters Arabella Magdalena and Tatiana Delfina. I thank God for my parents “Chief” Froilan Sergio Pedroza, a U.S. Army medic during WWII, and Eva Salazar Pedroza whose love, wisdom, discipline, and humor (in two languages!) I will cherish, always. To my brother George (“Tochi”) Pedroza who served as a U.S. Army medic in the Vietnam War; my sisters Sonia Jaramillo, a compassionate and dedicated civil servant, and Yolanda Diaz, who probably developed her skills as a teacher watching over me during my childhood.
Neither words nor deeds could ever convey the cariño, love, affection, appreciation, and respect I have for my loved ones—mi familia. I am blessed knowing I experienced the positive essence of familismo and the appreciation of my heritage. Gracias...thank you!

Acknowledgements
¡Gracias a Dios! God has blessed me with a rich life and a beautiful family. I would like to thank mi familia for their support, patience, and encouragement. My loved ones made huge sacrifices so that I could pursue my doctoral journey. I will be forever grateful for their heroism and affection. I hope I made them proud.

I would like to thank my mentor, Dr. Michael McIntyre, and my doctoral committee members Dr. Karine Clay and Dr. Martín M. Ahumada for their commitment and guidance throughout my doctoral journey. Dr. Ahumada, a highly respected scholar and former Harvard professor—and a deeply spiritual and dedicated family man—is deserving of a special saludo as a family friend.

I am grateful to the many scholars, University of Phoenix faculty, peers, classmates, and friends who inspired me to persist despite the challenges traversed along the doctoral journey. I would like to acknowledge everyone who has been a key part of my life, for they helped me grow as a person. I would also like to commend every individual who has made unselfish sacrifices dreaming of a better life for all people and creating a wiser society.

Finally, I want to applaud the participants in this study. The Latina and Latino scholars interviewed understood the significance of participating in this study from positions of leadership and as role models with tenure status in one of the most influential and powerful institutions in society: the research university. Their compassion, knowledge, and grace will inspire future generations of students to realize their dreams in la academia.

Tynnetta D. Kelley
Dissertation Title A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS IN THE WORKPLACE AND THE EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT CONSTRUCT

Abstract
According to recent research, African Americans were disengaged at work as a result of perceived racial discriminatory practices, which negatively impacted the group’s performance, wellbeing, and satisfaction. Employee engagement was documented as a sense of attachment resulting from interactions through role activities, which engendered feelings of connectedness and belongingness to the organization. Engaged workers were satisfied, committed, enthusiastic, motivated, and productive. Perceptions of racial discrimination and a lack of social interaction, support, autonomy, and work meaning were factors in disengagement. A qualitative study with a phenomenological design was carried out to explore employee engagement and motivation factors on African American workers’ sense of connectedness and belongingness in the workplace, and how the workers made sense of work experiences. The thematic findings included the following: purposeful work creates meaning, respect for worker, micromanagement, acknowledgement validates work efforts, familial kinships, and differential treatment. As supported in the literature, findings indicated work meaning, respect, acknowledgment, and work relationships positively impacted employee engagement. Micromanagement and differential treatment negatively impacted the engagement construct. Future research could expand on employee engagement by exploring common motivation and demotivation factors for all racial minority groups in the United States relative to the workplace.

Dedication
First and foremost, I dedicate this study to my African ancestors, whose presence I have felt every single day of my life. Thank you for giving up your lives to secure my future—blessed love to you. To Alexis Gian Kelley-Lamb, bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh: I love you more than anyone or anything in this entire world. You are the sole reason I continue to live and breathe, and I count it joy that you are my one and only legacy. Surely the gods were merciful when they entrusted your life to me, and I am forever grateful for the gift! Continue on the right path so that your feet do not stray, and your mind and heart is able to deal wisely with your fellow man—Jah bless and guide! To my parents, Earley and Dorothy Kelley: Thank you for impressing upon me the importance of education and filling my brain with an abundance of good knowledge to sustain a productive life. (Dad, I wish you could have lived to see this day.) I dedicate this work to my siblings: Benjamin, Angela, Asia, Rick, Hassan, Celeste, and Nadene, and also to my nieces and nephews, whose numbers are far too many to list here. To my husband Kevin Lamb, who provided for me during my entire adult life: Thank you and remember that I will love you always. To Blair Talmadge, who has never once in his life said “no” to me: Thanks for your mathematical genius, friendship, love, and financial support. Finally, I dedicate this work to my best friend, Major Dwyke Anton Bidjou, who at this very moment is fighting the war in Afghanistan. When we met many years ago at Temple University, you were a 6’6 Brooklyn kid from Trinidad. Through it all, you have been my rock and shoulder. You listened to me and carried me.
You stood me up, brushed me off, and made me go forward and not look back. Thank you, Bidjou, for your support and encouragement, but most of all for your love.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks go to my committee—Dr. Doreen McGunagle (my doctoral mentor), Dr. Brian Polding, and Dr. Gregory Berry—for your swift responses, keen insights, and ability to make me think harder and dig deeper. The process was a challenge for me, but you all provided expert guidance and direction while ensuring quality and academic rigor in my work. I could not have selected a more dedicated, energetic, and honest committee. I also acknowledge my friend, soror, informal doctoral mentor, and life coach, Dr. Dia Sekayi: Thank you for finding time in your very busy schedule to answer all my questions. I appreciate your wise counsel, your literature introductions and recommendations, and your love and support. Thanks also to another soror, Dr. Patricia Louison, for your knowledge of qualitative research techniques and your support. To my fellow doctoral classmates, Geanie Asante, Corrie Graham, Kelli Ligeikis, Kat Parsons, and Dom Susini: Thank you for your support and encouragement during all the times I cried and vented into your phones and on your shoulders: Ashanti Reddicks, Sheila Reese, David Austin, Reggie Jenkins, Keith Hinnant, Tawan Thomason, Rev. Steven Lewis, Sandy Gomez, Jose Albino, Vanessa Diaz, Tracey Campbell, Danerys Francis, Toby Eddison, Mary Cruz, Jessie Rivera, Elaine Montilla, Rudy Thompson, Adrian Clarke, Chariis Davis-Payne, Donovan West, Kwame’ Martin, Monica Lyons-Jones, Gary Holland, Soror Barbara Rascoe, Mungu Sanchez, Sharon Barnes (R.I.P.), Chip Lloyd, Ray Jaklitsch, Giovanni Campbell, Esq., Michelle Hurley, Joshua Deweerd, Letitia Jowosimi, Brian Rhodes, Esq., and my many Rastafarian bredren and sistren.

Jamila Williams

Dissertation Title A QUANTITATIVE, DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF POTENTIAL PARENTAL FACTORS THAT MAY HINDER STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Abstract

The purpose of this quantitative, descriptive study was to examine potential parental factors that may hinder student attendance by evaluating parental knowledge levels based on seven demographic characteristics. The study used a 21-item survey created specifically for this study. The sampling frame of potential participants derived from the parents/guardians of the 240 students at an inner-city, high poverty, high minority, PreK-8th grade school in Portland, Oregon. Data analysis was separated into three sections: 1) Parents'/guardians’ demographic data, 2) descriptive data of parental knowledge, understanding, and attitudes, and 3) inferential data, related to the null hypotheses for the three guiding research questions based on the seven independent variables of the parental demographic characteristics. The data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), a computerized program intended for data management and analysis. Testing for significant differences was determined using the Basic Statistical Testing for Significant Difference between percentages with a 99% confidence level. Based on the findings and analysis of the study, it appears that more research is needed to determine parental factors that may hinder student attendance. Recommendations for future research studies include a larger sampling frame, greater access to data management and analysis. Testing for significant differences was determined using the Basic Statistical Testing for Significant Difference between percentages with a 99% confidence level. Based on the findings and analysis of the study, it appears that more research is needed to determine parental factors that may hinder student attendance. Recommendations for future research studies include a larger sampling frame, greater access to parents/guardians, connecting parents'/guardians’ responses with their child/children, the addition of personal interviews, and additional analysis conducted from the survey data.

Dedication

This body of work is dedicated to my mother, Betty, who supported, encouraged, and pushed me through the process. Thank you, Mom for your continued love, patience, and support in all of my endeavors. To my children, Talibah, Adia, and Kerel, and grandchildren, Aalieyah, E.J., and Aryanna, who believed in me and loved me. I wanted to set an example showing that you can do anything you put your mind to no matter what your age. And finally, this dissertation is dedicated to all the students and parents I have had the honor of having touched my life through my 30-year career in education. Stay focused and remember, you are never too young nor too old to follow your dreams!

Acknowledgements

Many people helped me throughout my dissertation journey, some with words of encouragement, and some with prayers. I must first, give honor to God who is the head of my life. On the days I would get frustrated and discouraged with the dissertation journey, I would remember Proverbs 3:5, —Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths. I God’s comfort would keep me and inspire me to keep going.

A special thank you to my mentor, Dr. Philip Orlando who stuck with me, encouraged me, and supported me through the entire dissertation process. Dr. Orlando not only provided fantastic feedback, he also spoke words into my life that helped me feel that I could complete my dissertation. He never gave up on me and I thank you.
Thanks also to my committee members Dr. Donald Munday and Dr. Debra Maddox who provided feedback and support. They, too, stuck by me and encouraged me. Thank you to my financial counselor, Neel Dutt for keeping me on track and working with me!

Thank you to Dr. Harriett Adair who was my Area Director in Portland. Dr. Adair was the first to believe in me and encourage me to begin working on my dissertation. Thank you, Dr. Adair. You were and are a blessing to my life.

Shawn Michael Rieder

Dissertation Title IMPLICATIONS OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES ON MEDIA MEASUREMENT: A CASE STUDY OF ARBITRON

Abstract
In the current study, the implications of technology changes are explored with a case study of Arbitron, a leading media research firm. Arbitron is uniquely positioned as an organization that must adapt to changes in the media industry and as an organization introducing a disruptive technology. The Arbitron case study was used to identify themes regarding the disruptive developments in media technology, increased consumer control of media, technology and generation gaps in media consumers, how Arbitron can continue to leverage its proprietary PPM media measurement technology, and the transitive state of the media industry.

Dedication
The study is dedicated to my wife, Diane Rieder, who inspires me every day to continually improve myself. And to my grandparents, William and Ann Ecroyd, whose small investment in my future enabled me to purchase my first computer and begin my education.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank my mentor, Dr. Arnold Witchel, and my committee, Dr. D'Marie Hanson and Dr. Shanker Menon, for their guidance throughout the dissertation process. Their wisdom, experience, and patience were critical to the success of this study.

I would also like to thank the family, friends, and co-workers who supported and encouraged me throughout this journey. In particular, I would like to thank David Adler, Laura Kirk, Sandra Matza, and my mother, Angelina Bruno, for dedicating their time to help edit and review numerous early drafts of the various chapters of the study.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife and children, Diane, Libby, Adam, and Marc. Their patience and sacrifices throughout the process gave me the strength to continue this journey and reach my goals.

James Harris, Jr.

Dissertation Title EXPLORING PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS ABOUT COMPLETION OF SEXUAL HEALTH EDUCATION IN SOUTH CAROLINA PUBLIC SCHOOL

Abstract
Protection of the health and safety of students are an essential component of any comprehensive health education and public health plan (Hodge, Mair, Gable, 2008). The purpose of this phenomenological qualitative study was to provide an in-depth look into the students’ perspectives on the completion of current sexual health instruction within South Carolina public schools. The population in the study was comprised of 20 participant (10 males and 10 females) ages 18 to 20 consisting of high school graduates who have recently completed sexual health education in the public school systems. The results of the study produced themes for exploration that included a) expectations upon entering the course; b) content of the course addressing informational needs; c) benefits gained from the instruction; d) how the experience impacted decision-making. The study provided recommendations offering stakeholders insight on addressing the needs of the participants and can be used for instructional improvements.

Dedication
“People perish for a lack of knowledge….” This work is dedicated to all of the heroes and sheroes who face the challenge of educating the masses about STD, HIV/AIDS, and Teen Pregnancy. Though the task is great and the numbers continue to be mind boggling, you continue the fight. You may never know all of the lives you’ve touched. Knowledge is power.

Acknowledgements
To my wife Georgia for putting up with the late nights, early mornings and weekends I devoted to the pursuit of this degree. Thanks to each of my daughters who inspire me in your own pursuits for excellence. To N’Dia, my granddaughter, be the
Special thanks Constats Adams, you were my bridge that connected my vision with the one person with the resources to make it become a reality. Thanks to Rev. Izora Adamson, Dean of Students at Allen University for believing in the vision and realizing the implications of the research. Thanks to each of the participants for your willingness and candor in sharing your experiences. Thanks to the ladies of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. who stepped up female participation. Thanks to Mr. Ronnie Cole, SGA president for rallying the young brothers on campus. Mr. Chestley Price thank you for understanding the need to have the voices of young MSM represented.

Special thanks to my peers, Rev. Perry Oliver, Dr. Jacob White, Dr. David Malebranche and Mr. Matt ‘Deacon’ Jenkins for keeping me focused and providing support and encouragement. Jacob thanks for being a sounding board and helping me frame those probing questions. Thanks to Ms. Daphanie New for all of your support.

Finally special thanks to the ‘dream team.’ You were heaven sent. Dr. Mike Daniels with your ‘cool' swagger and style of mentoring thanks for guiding me through the maze. For both knowing the answers and finding the answers to my questions. Dr. ‘Bill’ Hight, you are the man. Thank you for your wisdom and years of experience in the field of STD/HIV. Dr. Lauren K. Simmons thanks for your energy and the knowledge you have of children.

Satyendra S. Kaith
Dissertation Title \textsc{Implications of Implementing Enterprise Resource Planning System Integration in Small-to-Medium-Sized Healthcare Organizations}

Abstract
Implementing an integrated enterprise resource planning (ERP) system is extremely challenging despite the benefits in small-to-medium-sized healthcare organizations. This qualitative case study research design used data obtained from the participants to analyze various aspects of their personal experiences. Invariant constituents were culled from the responses of participants, which were subsequently grouped into meaning units leading to eight themes via NVivo software for qualitative data analysis. The study concludes with recommendations for paying attention to the issues and concerns that could potentially bog down ERP implementation, such as lack of good fit between ERP implementation and business processes, lack of management support, resistance from employees, insufficient financial resources, improper planning of distribution of financial resources, improper planning on scope and timeframe of implementation, insufficient training and education, and insufficient documentation. In contrast, the factors that would facilitate ERP implementation are open lines of communication between employee and leader and among employees, involvement of employees in the decision-making, collaboration, and teamwork among employees, and effective leadership.

Dedication
My Late Parents and Elder Sister.

Acknowledgements
The successful completion of this research study involved many contributions from a number of persons — my mentor, friends and colleagues, willing participants, gentle critics, and able editors – all.

I am deeply indebted to my mentor Dr. Nancy Arduengo, for guiding me and encouraging me, with constant support, constructive feedback, and strategic suggestions as key factors for the completion of this project. I sincerely thank all willing participants for their courage to share their unbiased perceptions, while responding to the survey instrument, and providing their valuable input for the current research study. As promised in the cover letter for the Questionnaire, any information provided by respondents that could result in their identification, has been kept confidential.

I want to acknowledge the sacrifice and devotion of my loving wife Amrit for her continuous support, encouragement, and patience to allow me for overcoming all the challenges encountered during the current research study. I want to thank my family, to provide loving care and support throughout my life for becoming the first doctoral level member of my family. Special thanks to my late parents who worked so hard to support me while sitting and working with me until middnights, my brother who has encouraged me during tough times, and late elder sister who fulfilled my mother’s absence since November 2004, but who also suddenly passed away in January 2009.

I sincerely hope that the current research study will help healthcare information management community with a shared vision to ensure effective integration of global information systems (GIS) while implementing enterprise resource planning (ERP) solutions in small-to-medium-sized healthcare organizations.
**Joanne Lapidus-Graham**  
**Dissertation Title** THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARTICIPATION IN STUDENT NURSING ASSOCIATIONS AND LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

**Abstract**  
The purpose of the qualitative phenomenological research study was to obtain vivid descriptions of the lived experience of nurses who participated in a student nursing association (SNA) as students and how that experience shaped future leadership skills. Nursing graduates from several nursing programs in Long Island, New York were identified using a purposeful sampling strategy. During individual interviews, the lived experiences of the participants emerged. The findings of the study contributed to the following predominant themes: (1) leadership: communication, collaboration and resolving conflict, (2) mentors and mutual support, (3) empowerment and ability to change practice, (4) professionalism, (5) teamwork, (6) accountability and responsibility. Recommendations from the study included an orientation for new students to the SNA, to have nursing graduates mentor current nursing student SNA members, to have nursing faculty integrate SNA activities within the classroom and clinical settings, and to engage in future research.

**Dedication**  
The study is dedicated to my family, nursing colleagues at Farmingdale State College and my nursing students who provide me with endless pride that the future of nursing is in great hands. A heartfelt thank you to my husband Russell and sons Ryan and Joshua who were always patient when I had “one last page to type or one last item to attend to” before we could go out. Thank you to my parents who from the age of ten years old encouraged me to be a nurse and were always supportive even when times were tough.

**Acknowledgements**  
Many individuals contributed to success in my doctoral education. To my mentor, Dr. Robin Friedman: thank you for your unending support, guidance and patience, and for always being available when I needed help. You are truly a mentor and a role-model for all doctoral students. Thank you to my committee members Dr. Darlene Hess and Dr. Donna Taliaferro for always reading chapters on short notice, for contributing your expertise in nursing and for being kind and patient.

Thank you to Dr. Marie Hayden-Miles, the acting chair of the nursing program at Farmingdale State College and the Dean of the School of Health Sciences for your constant support, for allowing me to take a sabbatical leave and for arranging for scholarship money. Thank you to the nursing graduates who participated in the study and so enthusiastically and willingly shared your experiences. To my doctoral cohorts in the program who were always there to listen, provide suggestions and give encouragement- this team support made the last three years a treasured experience.

**Ayman A. Mousa**  
**Dissertation Title** PERCEPTION OF HOSPITAL LEADERS: FACTORS THAT MAY INFLUENCE HOSPITAL CLOSURE IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

**Abstract**  
Hospital closures in southern California became a common phenomenon in which more than 23 hospitals closed their services between the years of 1995 and 2000. The literature examination reflected gaps concerning the insights of hospital leaders on factors contributing to hospital closures in southern California. A qualitative exploratory case study method was used to explore the perceptions of hospital executives and managers on factors that may contribute to hospital closures. The major discoveries of the current case study suggested that lack of leadership and lack of funding were key factors that may contribute to hospital closures. The expense control and payer mix were the most influential factors in the financial performance of hospitals.

**Dedication**  
I dedicate this paper to my beloved wife, Lana, for all the support, patience, and enduring love and motivation that kept me going throughout this lengthy endeavor. Without her, I would never be able to complete this program. I dedicate this work to my lovely children, Myrna, Ramie, and Tamer for their patience, unconditional love, and support throughout this program. I want also to dedicate this to my parents, especially my late mother, who always encouraged me to pursue higher education; she was there at the start but did not make it to see me at the finish line.

**Acknowledgements**  
This lengthy learning journey gave me strength to help me endure this exceptional life experience. During this program, God was there every time I needed help to overcome the obstacles. I had many moments of uncertainty that I would never be able to make it to the end of this journey, but God was always there and kept me safe and going.
I wish to express my genuine personal gratitude to the committee team for their outstanding support, help, and belief that I could make it through this program. My mentor, Dr. Edward Paluch, who has a great deal of knowledge and enduring patience, guided me throughout this dissertation process. He provided continual commitment to my success. He empowered me to use my full potential to complete this project. His constructive and repetitive reviews made this dissertation possible. His help, support, patience, and professionalism made me a successful doctoral student. I would also like to acknowledge my committee members Dr. Amy Cooper Hakim and Dr. Mohammed Ahmed, and thank them for their quick responses with cheerful e-mails, encouragement, and constructive comments that kept me going and cheered me up during my tough times. Their detailed reviews and candid advice kept me focused on special aspects of this dissertation. Their insights were useful in enhancing the quality of this dissertation.

My special thanks for my wife, Lana, who never stopped encouraging me and never stopped praying for my success in this program and in my career. I want to thank my children Myrna, Ramie, and Tamer for the time that they gave me throughout this program, hoping to make it up to them in the coming years. I want to thank my family and friends who asked often about my progress in this program. I want also to thank my senior brother Nafez for his enduring support, encouragement, and his infinite brotherly advice.

I want also to express my appreciation for the support and enduring encouragement that I received from my colleagues at work. I want to extend my deepest appreciation to my ex-boss Casey Fatch for his acknowledgment of my potential, encouragement, and support. Many thanks for his directions and leadership. Finally, I want to acknowledge my cohorts who made it to the finish line: Dr. Catherine Horat, Dr. Grace Ogiehor, and hoping to call Carolyn Disher, Dr. Disher soon.

Lola A. Davis
Dissertation Title ABILITY OF LEADERS TO EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE AND INFLUENCE EMPLOYEES’ COMMITMENT TO ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Abstract
A significant function of business leaders is being able to define organizational goals and effectively communicate goals to employees in ways that employees understand the goals, their roles in achieving them, and commit to the goals. While many organizations experience difficulties traceable to employees not understanding organizational goals, their roles within the organization, or what they stand to gain from staying employed, there are leaders who effectively communicate organizational goals to employees and obtain employees’ commitment to organizational goals. This qualitative case study was conducted to explore the experiences of 20 past and current executives and senior leaders of mid-size and large organizations in Arizona and California, who were known to be effective at communicating goals to employees and at persuading individual employees to align with the goals. Participants were interviewed to identify their actions, and data was analyzed using content analysis of transcribed interview responses. Results establish these leaders’ effective communication of goals started at the staff recruitment stage and included certain factors: trust when leaders interacted with employees in humane ways, were good orators, communicated clearly, gave job descriptions, and were credible. Results also demonstrated leaders used informal interaction methods in communicating goals to employees and scheduled meetings with employees to allow employees to seek goal clarification. Certain study conclusions agreed with published literature: goal discussions were simple, frequent, tied to an employee’s role, and had value to an employee. Other conclusions were unusual with regard to literature: leaders emphasized hiring the kind of employee who understands and commits to goals, who already demonstrated goal alignment; leaders said they promptly discharged persons who did not master organizational goals; and leaders indicated their own ethical behavior was not critical to obtaining goal commitment and alignment. Recommendations to leaders include surveying entire organization to evaluate how the organization stands, re-assessing own knowledge of organizational goals, and employing leadership coaches and experts to train leaders not doing well. Recommendations for future research include using same research questions to obtain employees’ perspectives, conducting separate researches that will part and reverse each of the two research questions, but done from employees perspectives.

Dedication
I dedicate this dissertation to my late father, Pa Ezekiel Ogunniran Ogunshile, who passed to the great beyond on August 7, 2008. I am always grateful for the opportunity to have had you as my father. I just couldn’t have wished for a better father and friend, who never saw any negative in me, who respected and supported ALL my decisions (even when those sounded crazy to others), and who affirmed me throughout the time we spent together. I only wish you could have seen me graduate as a doctor.

This work is also dedicated to Dr. Oladiran Fawibe. Baba, many years ago, you gave ten thousand dollars as an investment in my life. I spent the entire money on education. I hope your investment has been fruitful so far.

Lastly, I dedicate this dissertation to all the strong women of Africa; women who dared to venture into what were once
considered a man’s world and who made it. I specially dedicate this work to Yoruba women. You are all an epitome of resounding success. I still continue to learn from your wisdom.

Acknowledgements
First, I wish to acknowledge the efforts of everyone who contributed to the success of this dissertation for their support, advice, correction of the work, and for being willing and helpful contributors. I specially acknowledge all the leaders, who despite their extremely tight schedules, created time to accommodate my interviewing them. I acknowledge the efforts of my able editor, Ms. Sybil Taylor Aytch for taking the time to read and correct the work.

I thank my mentor, Dr. Ralph Melaragno, for helping me produce a high quality dissertation, for your concerns for my health, and for being patient with me. I thank Dr. Michael S. Hudson for his selfless service, for his support and help, and for never wasting time in reviewing any of the drafts of the dissertation I submitted for his review. Lastly, I thank Dr. Samuel Onipede for his help, his very positive, encouraging, and friendly attitude, for his support, encouragement, and advice.

I appreciate all of you, your willingness to work with me, and for helping me achieve one of my life goals.

Cheryllann Robinson
Dissertation Title A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF OBESITY: THE PERSPECTIVE OF HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

Abstract
Obesity has reached epidemic proportions in the United States. As a result, the health care system is overloaded with obesity-related preventable diseases, which has caused health care providers to be overworked and health care spending to reach a record high. This qualitative content analysis study was to gain an understanding of the personal experiences of being a health care provider working in an obesity prevention and treatment programs. Through gaining understanding of these experiences, improvements or revisions of the current strategies could reduce obesity among adults in San Antonio, Texas. The study consists of 15 health care providers voluntarily working in obesity control and prevention settings. The data collection was analyzed by NVivo 8, which revealed nine major themes.

Dedication
I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Jarrett Robinson; my children, Malik, and Mya; and to three most powerful female influences in my life: my mother, Christine Donaldson; my sister Janette Phillips-Higgins; and the former Jamaican minister of Education Dr. Mavis Gilmore who have all inspired me to work hard and achieve my goals. Your support and sacrifices have touched my heart. Thanks to all of you.

Acknowledgements
I wish to acknowledge several individuals whose contributions made this achievement possible. First, I owe a debt of gratitude to the professors and instructors at the University of Phoenix who provided me with a quality doctoral program. My appreciation goes to Dr. Jay Klagge, my mentor whose encouragement and steady hand helped me get through the dissertation process; as well as to my committee members, Dr. Susan Orshan, who continues to be a source of inspiration and enlightenment; and Dr. Sushil Jindal. Both of them were willing to assist me and commit their time and insights to the dissertation process. Second, I wish to thank my cohorts who I am blessed to have shared this journey. To all my family and friends I want to thank you all for your encouragement and prayers especially over the last three years, without you all I could not have accomplished my dream. Most important, I am thankful to God for accomplishing this personal goal.

Meredith Collins
Dissertation Title ADDRESSING EQUITY IN EDUCATION AND ITS IMPLICATIONS IN THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Abstract
This quantitative retrospective quasi-experimental study was undertaken to determine whether culturally responsive instructional strategies, converted information about home and community into effective classroom practice and supported a culturally relevant pedagogy. Data for this study were obtained from CSAP reading scores, MAP reading Fall and Spring scores, and 7th-grade Language Arts letter scores for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years for students taught by CARE instruction and by non-CARE instruction. An ANOVA was used to test the hypotheses and to examine the differences among the means of five data sets from the two instructional methods. Following the ANOVA, an ANCOVA was used to produce a less biased estimate of group effects and reduce the error variance. The conclusion drawn after analysis was that the type of instructional method used, more specifically the CARE program, did not make a difference in closing the racial achievement gap for 7th-grade reading students at the research location.
Dedication
I would like to first dedicate this to my mom, Ann T. Giarrusso, whose words allowed me to stay with my educational journey, made me realize that I could finish, and for her love and support. I would also like to dedicate this to my dad, Donald P. Giarrusso, for his continued love and support.

The last year of this doctoral journey was definitely the most difficult. So many ups and downs to contend with—and standing there next to me the entire time, encouraging me, loving me, pulling me from the ledge, was my best friend, my love, Kent F. Collins. I would like to thank him for his patience, understanding, and love. For helping me when I was completely lost for words. I would also like to dedicate this to my best friend, Christina DeVille, for all of her continued love and support. She is an amazing woman who has always listened, supported, and genuinely cared.

I would finally like to dedicate this to my son, Brandon M. Bianchi, and my daughter, Marissa K. Bianchi, for being there, some days more understanding than others, but for still accepting, supporting, and cheering me on. I would like to thank both of them for their patience and love.

Acknowledgements
I would like to acknowledge and thank my mentor, Dr. Paul T. Frankenhauser Jr., for his support during the completion of my dissertation. I would like to acknowledge and thank my committee members, Dr. Jimmie Chambers and Dr. Elisabeth Weinbaum, for their feedback and encouragement.

I would like to acknowledge and thank tremendously my friend, my colleague, my editor, my statistician, and my partner in crime—Melissa Vass. Without you this would not have been possible. You are an amazing person, scholar, and friend. Thank you so much for all you have done!

Oh Mighty Ducks—I must acknowledge Melissa Vass, Laszlo Vass, and Gloria Ohmart for their friendship, laughter, and dedication. Every residency was wonderful because of all of you! The days spent around Gloria’s table working, struggling, and growing as scholars will always be treasured. You are an amazing group of people that I’m grateful to be able to call my friends. Thank you all for everything—I love you guys!

I would like to acknowledge all of my professional colleagues who helped me along the way—Dr. Tony Poole, Lee-Ann Hayen, James Cronin, Sarah Lee, Sonja Johnson, and Loree Smith. Whether it was helping me with data, picking a brain, or just words of encouragement—I appreciate all each has done for me. Each has made this journey attainable.

Debra Rogers Lowe
Dissertation Title A QUALITATIVE ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUTS

Abstract
This qualitative ethnographic study considered factors that influence African American males to drop out of high school. The following research questions guided the investigation of lived experiences and perceptions of African American males in the Central Piedmont area of North Carolina on why they left school before graduating: (1) What factors influenced African American males in the Central Piedmont area of North Carolina to leave school before graduating; (2) What factors could have influenced African American males in the Central Piedmont area of North Carolina to stay in school. A purposive, snowballing sampling method was used to select 16 African American male participants over 18 years old who dropped out of school. The data collection process consisted of importing responses to transcribed, semi-structured interview questions into NVivo 8 software data management program for organization and analysis. Five themes emerged from the data findings: school environment, societal conditions, family issues, instruction, and instructional support. Recommendations within this study include replicating the current study to include other geographic areas; cultural proficiency training for school staff; adjusting instruction to accommodate diverse learners; implementing elementary school programs to help African American males with learning deficiencies become proficient before reaching middle and high school; improving relationships between teachers and African American males; examining the course selection process for African American males in high school. Implementing the recommendations of this study could substantiate the need for professional development training in cultural awareness and differentiated instruction.

Dedication
First, I give all thanks and praises to God for restoring me so that I could start, continue, and finish this journey. God did not give up on me and for that I say Thank you Lord! Thanks to my husband Michael who has and continues to support me in whatever I want to do. I love you for your faithfulness and unselfishness. Both of us pursuing higher education at the same time was challenging but we made it through with our marriage intact. I dedicate this work to my children Kaye Bell Lindsay and Aaron LeVar Bell who are my life and of whom I am very proud. I love you unconditionally and hope that I have
inspired you in some way. Continue to follow your dreams and reach for your goals no matter what obstacles life put in your way. You have and will always be the wind beneath my wings. I also dedicate this work to Jessica, Sydney, and Kaylen. Mommy D loves you very much and hopes I have been an example that you can accomplish anything with hard work and dedication. Do not let others establish limitations for you but be limited only by your desire to achieve. To my sisters Suberba Terry and Constance Rogers, my brother, Lloyd (Butch) Rogers, and my mother Alberta Evans, I say thank you for being there in the good and bad times. I am glad that you are my family. Finally, to Barnaby and Precious, my four-legged children, you will now have some of my attention!

This is my season of unusual blessings. I am looking for miracles but expect the impossible!

Acknowledgements
Thank you to the many associates, coworkers, and members of Williams Memorial CME Church for your prayers and good wishes. I want to acknowledge Dr. Florence Aitken as my mentor and appreciate her choosing to be a part of my journey. I also want to acknowledge Dr. Venita Holmes for being a member of my committee and for her methodological expertise which was instrumental to my success.

Sincere thanks and appreciation go to Dr. Elizabeth Young for her guidance and dedication during my doctoral journey. I learned so much in her classes and know that I could not have made it without her help. Thanks for being my guardian angel and for being there for me many times when you did not have to be. Words will never express how eternally grateful I am to you.

Thank you to the administration and residents of the Open Door Ministry for their support and assistance during my research. I acknowledge Dr. Lea Scott and soon-to-be Dr. Ernelyn Navarro for their consultative sessions concerning the data management process. I also acknowledge Garth Woodbury as my academic advisor. Thanks to soon to be Dr. Henrietta Singleton for insisting I start this journey with her. Thanks to my friend and traveling buddy Michelle Bodie-Anderson for her encouragement and for insisting I take time away from my studies every now and then to relax and have fun. Thank you to my nephew Randy Rogers for his motivation, assistance, continued encouragement, and heart to heart talks. I look forward to sharing his journey as he begins doctoral work in Public Health Administration. Finally, I thank my childhood friend, sister, and Soror, Dr. Queenie Sellers Dalcoe who continues to be an inspiration and role model for me. I love you my sister! I made it!