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 consequence 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 in their own way as the abstracts themselves.

Many readers of this journal have written to 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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In this issue:

Lynn DeMuth, Ed.D.
George D. Kantarakias, D.B.A.
Ozondu Ugbaja, D.B.A.
Jerry D. Webb, D.B.A.
Jerelyn L. Duncan, D.M.
Rebecca Lauterbach, D.B.A.
Jimmie S. Warren, D.M.
Matthew David Frederiksen, D.H.A.
Mercy C. Nyman, Ed.D.
Duane M. Smith, D.M.
John M. D. Salovardos, Ed.D.
Jeanie Moten Randle, Ed.D.
Josefina Luzon, D.B.A.
LaToya Lewis-Pierre, Ed.D.
Mary Joan Berger, Ed.D.
Jeanette Marie Landin, Ed.D.
Rhonda P. Sturdavant-Harris, D.M.
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Mirella Brooks, Ph.D - Nursing
Amy Hakim, Ph.D - I/O Psychology
Carol Hall, Ed.D - Education (K-12)
Elizabeth Young, Ph.D - Education (K-12)
Anastasia Metros, Ph.D - Higher Education
Lynn DeMuth  
**Dissertation Title** TEACHING DISPOSITIONS: SHARED UNDERSTANDING FOR TEACHER PREPARATION

**Abstract**  
This qualitative phenomenological study explored the perceptions of 16 high-performing teachers related to teaching dispositions, effects of dispositions on teaching and learning, and recommendations for assessment of teaching dispositions during teacher preparation. Participants' perceptions were gathered using six guided interview questions related to a central research question and two sub-questions. Content themes and sub-themes related to each interview question were derived using an analysis technique defined by Sadala and Adorno (2002) and a modified Van Kaam method described by Moustakas (1994) including description, identification of themes, reflection, and interpretation. Core content themes related to definitions of teaching dispositions included attitude, commitment, and focus on students. Participants recommended frequent field experiences throughout teacher preparation as the most effective means of assessing teacher candidates' dispositions and preparedness for teaching. Recommended assessment instruments included rubrics, interviews, observation checklists, case studies, reflection papers, and self-assessments to evaluate the full spectrum of teaching dispositions. Suggested definitions of teaching dispositions, recommendations for effective assessment during teacher preparation, and ideas for redesigning teacher preparation programs are provided.

**Dedication**  
This work and the journey behind it are dedicated to my first teachers, my parents Don DeMuth and Barbara Scherbarth DeMuth. They taught me the value of education and learning, dedication to purpose, and the importance of keeping around you the people who care. To my first-grade teacher, Anna Eckleberry: her perseverance and dedication established and transformed my vision of what school could mean and the joy that comes from learning. To my husband, Duke Mertz: without his support, I would not have made it through the doctoral process. He knew when to speak and when to keep silent. He listened without judgment, offered sound advice, and made the appropriate jokes at the appropriate times. I am ever grateful.

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To the teachers who make a positive difference in the lives of kids every day: thank you for your dedication and professionalism. To my colleagues who traveled this path before me: thank you for your help and guidance. To Dr. Peggy Irwin who served as my mentor through the process of writing and refining: your unfailing guidance and support lifted me through the difficult times and kept me going. To Dr. Carolyn Buckenmaier and Dr. Terry Edwards, thank you for your perspective and ideas.

George D. Kantarakias  
**Dissertation Title** DISCOURSE, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING IN COMMUNICATIONS: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF PRESIDENTIAL INCIDENTS WITH LEADERSHIP THEORY

**Abstract**  
In this NVivo9 qualitative content analysis, identifying skills awareness for present and future business leaders provided a concentration that may assist leaders who possess a lack of emotional intelligence, vision, and foresight skills in their discourse, evaluation, and learning in communications. The purpose of this qualitative content review was to draw from the analysis of three presidential historical communication incidents, postmodern leadership theory, and interviews to create an ontological and epistemological awareness that developed from content analysis behavioral patterns of the aforementioned skills use of presidential leaders. Development occurred using a NVivo9 content word analysis and a hermeneutic interpretation of past text on presidential incidents that included George Washington’s Farewell Address, Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg Address, and Ronald Reagan’s Berlin Wall speech, with current interviews regarding the use of the skills of emotional intelligence, vision, and foresight in the processes of discourse, evaluation, and learning in communications related to those incidents. The content analysis methodology and results provide enlightenment to leadership and allows leaders to examine their approach through content awareness and to make adjustments when
identifying a lack of focus in their use of vision, foresight, and emotional intelligence skills in their focus-driven discourse, evaluation, and learning process in communications.

**Dedication**

I dedicate this study first to my lovely wife Susan for her loving support of my dream and unwavering understanding, encouragement, and guidance and the same love of presidential history - thank you Susan. This content analysis is also dedicated to the three presidential leaders George Washington, Abraham Lincoln, and Ronald Reagan for providing the messages that leaders today can examine to assist to aid awareness to the communications process within their own organizations.

**Acknowledgements**

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Ozondu Ugbaja

**Dissertation Title** LEADERSHIP ATTITUDE TOWARD SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY: MANAGING OCCUPATIONAL CRISIS IN NIGER DELTA AREA, NIGERIA

**Abstract**

The phenomenological qualitative inquiry investigated effects of leadership attitudes regarding social responsibility in multinational companies and how leadership attitude affects occupational crisis in Niger Delta, Nigeria. Crippling social crisis caused by perceived leadership ambivalence has affected the sociopolitical economy of Niger Delta, Nigeria. The qualitative design was necessary to understand such perceptions by focusing on social interaction, which included face-to-face and telephone interviews. The theoretical framework proposed that socially responsible organizations experience limited crises. The central research question highlighted effects of leadership attitude regarding occupational crisis on multinational companies in Niger Delta, Nigeria. The research results produced 10 themes that included (a) Community, (b) Safety issues, (c) Crisis, (d) Management issues, (e) Economic issues, (f) Relationships, (g) Environments, (h) Livelihood, (i) Attitude, and (j) Infrastructure. The themes confirmed that a positive attitude is effective in organizational management of turbulent environments. The themes also show that management by inclusion and participation is important in societies in which organizations conduct business.

**Dedication**

To my family.

**Acknowledgements**

I acknowledge and appreciate the support of my mentor Dr. T Anderson and my committee members—Dr. L Atkinson and Dr. J Ballaro. Their approach suited my academic attitude. Dr T Anderson’s subtlety is a leadership insight.

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My sincere appreciation goes also to the men and women who responded to research interview questions. I thank them for taking out some time to participate in the study. The research would not have been possible without their responses. Their desire to provide the required information and share personal experiences was valuable to the research. Their affirmation of the importance of the research to the Niger Delta territory was an incentive for progress.
Finally, I thank the infinite intelligence for wisdom and opportunities. Without Him everything is impossible. He is the Illumination that lights the pathway.

Jerry D. Webb

**Dissertation Title** A RESOURCE-BASED PERSPECTIVE OF FIRST-MOVER ADVANTAGE: AN EXPLORATORY CASE STUDY OF THE HAYNESVILLE SHALE PLAY

**Abstract**
The first-mover into a market or business opportunity may acquire advantages over competitors which translate into value. However, despite numerous studies to understand and quantify first-mover advantages, leaders remain uncertain over the timing and circumstances of market entry to optimize value. The purpose of this qualitative case study was to develop new theory with the potential to increase understanding of first-mover advantage. Research was conducted from a resource-based perspective by exploring the capture of scarce natural-resources. Leaders from eight organizations participated in study interviews and four themes emerged from analysis of the data. First, the ownership of initial resources, in the form of oil and gas leases, mineral rights, and fee ownership were found to provide advantages in resource acquisition costs, royalty burdens, infrastructure, and flexibility in timing of development. Initial resources, in terms of technology, know-how, and geosciences were also found to create advantages. Secondly, access to capital for capture and development of resources was found to create competitive advantage by allowing economies of scale and integration opportunities to be realized. Thirdly, cost efficiencies related to the early capture of materials and services and deferral of market entry were also found to create advantages. Fourth, an awareness and mitigation of the inordinate influence of subjective factors, such as culture and reputation, on market-entry strategy was found to create competitive advantage. The results of this study provide information that may help leaders employ actions optimizing organizational value through future market-entry decisions.

**Dedication**
I dedicate this dissertation to my family who has supported me through this journey. My wife Lori, my son Jerry, and my daughters Ashley and Jade have encouraged me throughout this quest with their unwavering love and guidance. To my wife, I express my love and appreciation for her kind words of encouragement to keep me moving forward through numerous obstacles and self-doubt.

To my children, I hope to convey the importance of setting attainable goals and the value of dedication and persistence in realizing your own ambitions. I also dedicate this dissertation to my mother Peggy and father Jerry. You are the best parents that any child could ever hope for. You taught me the value of hard work, self-reliance, respect for others, and a sense of fairness towards all people.

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Jerelyn L. Duncan

**Dissertation Title** FACTORS ATTRIBUTING TO A LEADERSHIP-FOLLOWERSHIP TEAM MODEL AS PERCEIVED BY FOLLOWERS: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL CASE STUDY

**Abstract**
The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological case study was to discover followers’ perceptions of factors to garnering followership engagement and commitment using a leader-follower team model to establish an environment for effective ministry outreach at an urban religious organization. The study used semi-structured face-to-face audio-taped interviews
through the application of a modified van Kaam method by Moustakas (1994) to explore the lived experiences of a purposeful sample of 20 pastors, administrators, and staff at First Assembly of God in North Little Rock, Arkansas. Four core themes emerged from the participant responses to the interview questions to include: (a) mission, vision, and values, (b) development of followers, (c) culture of honor, and (d) relationships. The conclusion derived from the study implies that an initial attempt at comprehending followers’ perceptions of factors that attribute to followership engagement and commitment to establish an environment for effective ministry outreach may provide greater insight concerning the construct of leadership not previously measured for leaders to enhance organizational productivity and performance by engaging followers. The research data supports the substance and quality of the development of strong leadership and followership relations in the religious setting influences organizational commitment and performance.

Dedication
This dissertation is dedicated to my family, my two daughters, Ashley and Brittany, and to my husband, Kenneth. My family provided the support system to transform my dream into a reality. I also dedicate this accomplishment to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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I want to thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for His love, strength, and power that aided me during this doctoral journey. I want to acknowledge and thank my committee members. I appreciate Dr. Craig Martin, my chair, for providing unwavering guidance and support. I thank Dr. Linda Atkinson for her enthusiasm and attention to detail. I also thank Dr. Aretha Marbley for ensuring I obtain an understanding of the dissertation process.

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Rebecca Lauterbach
Dissertation Title A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPATION IN AN EMPLOYER-SPONSORED TUITION ASSISTANCE PLAN AND ORGANIZATIONAL LEARNING

Abstract
The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to explore the lived experience of individuals who have participated in a company-sponsored tuition assistance plan (TAP). The study focused on any business industry where employees have access to a professional development benefit. For this study, the professional development benefit assessed was TAPs. The study provides a descriptive account of exploring the characteristics and feelings of participants who have used a TAP. Data analysis revealed core themes from the responses to the open-ended interview questions. The themes included (a) improvement of leadership, (b) lack of program (TAP) visibility, and (c) lack of recognition through rewards and incentives. The findings indicate that while TAPs are beneficial, organizations must ensure that employees are aware of the plan benefits and understand the plan rules. Future study is recommended to consider the cross-generations within the workplace and understand the common interest between employees of different generations and the desires to earn a higher educational degree.

Dedication
I dedicate this dissertation to my children Eli and Sidney Lauterbach, the eyes of the future.

This dissertation is also dedicated to my parents Ronald and Karen Young, who always provided encouragement, understanding, motivation, and most importantly love. Thank you for instilling in me the need and importance of earning a college degree and encouraging me to pursue my master’s and finally doctorate. I also dedicate this dissertation to my brother Donald (Donnie) Young, my sister-in-law Janet, my nephew Benjamin (Ben), my niece Madison (Maddie), and my grandmother, Betty Young.

In addition, I dedicate this dissertation in loving memory of my grandparents: Donald Young and Sidney and Dorothy Lease.

A special dedication is reserved for Olive (Duttie) Miller, my great aunt who at 86 years old still values higher education. Duttie has always served as a source of wisdom, and throughout my life, she remained the most dedicated cheerleader.
that I could have ever asked for. Thank you for your encouragement and interest in everything I do. When I earned my college degree, Duttie wrote the following in a card, “You have something I have always wanted . . . a college degree! Congratulations!” I have always remembered those words; even more, I am reminded of the privileges I have been afforded in earning my degrees. Thank you Duttie, you are the most incredibly special person!

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Jimmie S. Warren

Dissertation Title
TRUST IN IMMEDIATE SUPERVISOR, TRUST IN TOP MANAGEMENT, ORGANIZATIONAL TRUST PRECURSORS: PREDICTORS OF ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

Abstract
The quantitative correlational research study addressed the problem of a lack of knowledge on the predictive nature or strength of the independent variables; trust in immediate supervisor, trust in top management, and organizational trust precursors for producing organizational effectiveness (OE) that can also lead to a sustainable competitive advantage. The study was conducted on a research division of a federal government agency via electronic survey format. The study revealed that in addition to significant and positive correlations among the trust and OE variables, the results of a multiple regression analysis for the model as a whole showed an adjusted R2 value of .6630, indicating that 66.3% of the variation in the dependent variable, OE, was explained by the independent variables. An F-value of 134.8, significant at the .05 level (p-value < .0001), indicated that the overall regression model was a good fit. All three levels of trust experienced by subordinate employees were positive and significant predictors of OE. Hierarchical multiple regression also showed that organizational trust precursors (βb = .379, βb = .573, t-value = 8.310, and p-value < .0001), and not trust in top management (βa = .096, βb = .128, t-value = 1.970, and p-value = .0508) or trust in immediate supervisor (βa = .120, βb = .245, t-value = 5.370, and p-value < .0001) was a stronger positive predictor of OE. Managers and supervisors will be able to gain practical knowledge that will aid in positive and productive interactions with subordinate employees within organizations.

Dedication
I dedicate this study to my wife who is my life-partner, friend, lady, “Boo”, colleague, and fellow believer in Christ, Cathy Warren, who herself is a brave and courageous adult learner. I dedicate this study to my children: to my son Theodore, who wants to teach life to be courageous; to my daughter Jasmine, who wants to heal life when it is not well; to my daughter Sariah, who wants to protect life from false witness; to my son Jimmie, Jr., who wants to teach life that it has not been abandoned; and to my son Daniel (DEW), who wants to fix life when it is broken.

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Matthew David Frederiksen
Dissertation Title ENGAGING PHYSICIANS TO SUPPORT CORPORATE COMPLIANCE PROGRAMS: A GROUNDED THEORY STUDY

Abstract
The purpose of this qualitative study was to discover strategies that hospital administrators can use to obtain support from physicians as they pertain to corporate compliance, while still remaining accountable and loyal to healthcare organizations. By interviewing eight physicians and eight hospital administrators, the study sample was used to gather information on behaviors that influence and affect physician participation in corporate compliance programs. Using the grounded theory design of qualitative research was most appropriate for this study. The use of purposive sampling was most appropriate for this study and produced data for a comparative analysis. The comparative analysis allowed for the generation of a grounded theory by first extracting primary themes for the collected data. Twelve primary themes emerged from the content analysis, which produced four categories, producing a grounded theory, The Hospital Compliance Leader Theory. The hospital compliance leader theory indicates that hospital administrators can engage physicians in corporate compliance programs, while maintaining physician loyalty. To accomplish this, the healthcare leaders must incorporate each of the following: (a) use appropriate training programs while understanding the challenges the physicians face; (b) bridge the artificial gap between hospitals and physicians by educating physicians on the potential consequences the hospital faces because of noncompliance; (c) training physicians on corporate compliance, emphasizing the benefits to patient care with full support from the administrative leadership team; and (d) mandating physician compliance training and focusing the training on the greatest compliance risk areas.

Dedication
I dedicate this study to the Compliance Officers. I also dedicate this to my family, for their continued support and love.

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I would not have achieved my goal without the love and support of many individuals. Many of whom I came to know during the dissertation journey and I feel fortunate to have you in my life.

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Mercy C. Nyman

Dissertation Title A QUANTITATIVE, COMPARISON STUDY: ORAL LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND HIGH STAKES TESTING

Abstract
The amount of oral language exposure a young child receives affects the child’s reading-readiness skills. Factors that affect the increase of language and thus affect the reading success of children include oral language ability, learning opportunities, and behaviors that young children experience. Oral language development includes gaining full phonological awareness and is the basis of phonemic awareness. When young children do not have sufficient vocabulary and literacy experiences, they will have limited reading fluency and comprehension. Oral language skills and habits may also be factors contributing to success in school-related tasks, such as reading. Difficulty in developing reading-readiness skills can indicate the student will have difficulties in future elementary grades, including having poor vocabulary, reading below grade level, and struggling to understand the curricula. Students may experience these deficiencies well into the high-stakes testing established as a result of the No Child Left Behind Act. The current study involved comparing two types of reading-readiness curricula (A Beka vs. A Beka and ELOLAAT). The curricula were compared by analyzing the differences in kindergarteners’ subscores on the reading portion of the SAT. The data analysis shows that the scores of kindergarteners at School B (A Beka and ELOLAAT) were higher than the scores of kindergarteners at School A (A Beka only) to a statistically significant degree. Early educators can use the findings of this study to make informed decisions on how to most effectively help young children learn.

Dedication
The following words of John J. Bingham (2012) accurately describe my doctoral journey: “The miracle is not that I finished; the miracle is that I had the courage to start.” Reflecting on the amount of work this journey entailed, I humbly dedicate this study to my daughter, Kristen Nyman, and to my husband, Keith Winn. Without their support, completing this journey would not have been possible. To my daughter, who I am honored to have as my child, I pray that God will always guide your path and show favor on you as you seek to attain all your dreams in life. To my husband, your support of and dedication to my success in this journey is humbling. Your patience with me during the countless hours of writing are not only appreciated but also leave me in awe of the selfless love and support you have shown me. Thank you!

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Duane M. Smith

Dissertation Title A STUDY OF COMMAND AND CONTROL OF MULTI-AGENCY DISASTER RESPONSE OPERATIONS

Abstract
Large-scale disaster response operations are complex events that involve multiple jurisdictions and multiple agencies in preparedness, response, and recovery efforts. In the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United States sought to develop a national model for managing disaster response operations. The result of those efforts was the creation of the National Incident Management System (NIMS) in 2004. In 2005, the Gulf Coast of the United States experienced Hurricane Katrina. This disaster provided the first real-world opportunity to employ NIMS and assess its ability in providing an effective framework for response and recovery operations. Post-event analysis revealed that few saw the
response and recovery efforts as effective; subsequently, NIMS was revised in 2008. This study focused on the experiences of past incident commanders to gather a better understanding of the phenomenon of command and control of large-scale multi-agency disaster response operations. This phenomenological study identified seven themes and their interdependencies, seen by past leaders of disaster response operations as being key factors in establishing effective command and control of large-scale disaster response operations. This knowledge serves to inform current disaster response operations under NIMS and provides insights of potential areas requiring future revisions.

Dedication
This journey is dedicated to the memory of my parents, who planted in me the desire to continue to learn, to believe in myself, to challenge what is to become the what can be, and most important, to see life and the world as gifts that should be cherished and nurtured.

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A special thanks goes to my family. First, I thank my daughters, Nicole and Andréa, who have been constant supporters in so many ways. More important, I thank my wife Doreen. She has supported my journey every step of the way, celebrating alongside as milestones were reached, giving guidance when I was drifting off course, and never letting me consider cutting my journey short. I cannot thank her enough for sacrificing so much time we could have been together so that I could read, study, and write. Simply said, without her unwavering support and belief in me, this paper would not be.

John M. D. Salovardos
Dissertation Title EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN DETERMINING TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TRAITS: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION ADMINISTRATORS

Abstract
This quantitative, correlation study explored whether an emotional intelligence test, the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, could be used to determine transformational leadership traits. The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT), along with the 16 Personality Factor – Fifth Edition, and Multi-factor Leadership Questionnaire, were used to survey 37 public school special education administrators, working in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The degree of correlation between variables was determined using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Based upon the subjective results of the sample, no significant correlation between the tools was determined. The inference is that the MSCEIT cannot be used to determine transformational leadership traits. Recommendations are made to examine the further nature of emotional intelligence tests and leadership traits relevant to identifying abilities that may be specific to certain jobs. The identification of leadership traits may be best suited for use as a component of a larger assessment process and as a way to provide professional development for weaker skills.

Dedication
This study is dedicated to my family, friends, and colleagues that have encouraged the dreams of an average person. To my wife and two children who have tirelessly supported my efforts and absence to complete this study. To my children, I hope that in their eyes they will learn the value of education and perseverance. This study is also dedicated to the participants of the sample who, as special education administrators, are often among the under recognized advocates for quality public education and effective leadership.

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Jeanie Moten Randle
Dissertation Title EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT WITH A FOCUS ON SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

Abstract
The study involved a mixed methodology, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, to investigate the correspondence between emotional intelligence levels and conflict management style among elementary and intermediate school principals in an urban school district, the Abilene Independent School District, in Taylor County, Texas. The focus of the research was on two questions: (a) which aspects of emotional intelligence contribute to the skill set of those charged with conflict management and (b) is it possible by means of standardized measuring instruments and in-depth interviews to demonstrate a correspondence between higher levels of emotional intelligence and enhanced leadership skills, including conflict management? The conclusion reached as a result of the research indicates the existence of a sociability correspondence that might be unquantifiable with currently available testing instruments but that appears to link the respondents with higher emotional intelligence levels and with a more effective conflict management style.

Dedication
I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my mother Gertrude, my son Dennis, my daughter Nicole, my granddaughter Alex, and my two grandsons Diego and Derrick.

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Josefina Luzon
Dissertation Title MEASURING PERFORMANCE OF NONPROFIT INTERNATIONAL AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH CENTERS (IARCS)

Abstract
Nonprofit organizations, specifically international agricultural research centers (IARCs), continue to grow in number and influence the implementation of public policies, vitality of civil society, and global economy. The little research or literature available on the use of performance measurement as a strategic tool in assessing nonprofit organizations’ effectiveness in the accomplishment of their missions poses a general problem. Furthermore, no adequate performance measurement mechanisms exist for determining a nonprofit IARC’s effectiveness in fulfilling its mission. The relationship between performance measurement variables and nonprofit IARC’s effectiveness in fulfilling their missions was investigated using a quantitative correlational study. The sample was 80% of the population studied (12 out of 15 IARCs that are members of an alliance of international research centers supported by the CGIAR – Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research were studied). The Spearman’s correlation coefficient was used to test the relationships between knowledge of customer needs and satisfaction (r = 0.32, p = 0.32), internal business processes (r = 0.27, p = 0.40), learning and growth (r = 0.72, p = 0.01), and financial performance (r = 0.24, p = 0.46) and the effectiveness of nonprofit IARCs in fulfilling their missions. The only statistically significant correlation was between knowledge of learning and growth and the effectiveness of nonprofit IARCs in fulfilling their missions. Leaders of nonprofit IARCs who are searching for ways to explain, predict, and improve organizational effectiveness could find the results of the study useful. Information about measuring and
improving performance could also be useful to those researching nonprofit organizations in general.

Dedication
This dissertation is dedicated to my Lord and God who has given me the strength and courage to finish this endeavor. It is also dedicated to my family whose unwavering love continues to keep me on the path and journey: Ennio, the love of my life; my mother, Aurea, my spiritual guide; and finally, the men and women who spend endless hours and energy eradicating hunger and poverty, making this world a better place to live in, as well as those who support the efforts of these devoted individuals.

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LaToya Lewis-Pierre
Dissertation Title WORKPLACE READINESS OF NEW ICU NURSES: PERCEPTIONS OF MANAGERS, EDUCATORS, PRECEPTORS, AND NEW RN GRADUATES

Abstract
The purpose of the qualitative grounded-theory study was to generate a theory to explain workplace readiness and needs of new graduates entering the intensive care unit (ICU) from the viewpoint of managers, clinical educators, preceptors, and new registered nurses (RN) graduates. The study involved 24 nurses including five managers, four educators, eight preceptors, and seven new graduates working in Florida with 1,550 beds, which includes 115 specialized ICU beds. A qualitative grounded theory developed from analyzing the responses from face-to-face interviews and identifying competencies and skills required for new graduates to enter the ICU. The following four themes emerged: (a) embracing the new ICU role, (b) overwhelming experience of performance ambiguity or anxiety, (c) adapting to the ICU, and (d) embodying the new ICU RN role.

The results of this study indicate that new ICU RN’s have limited exposure in nursing school to the ICU and the inclusion of the novice nurse embracing the ICU theory (NNEIT) could enhance the new nurses’ transition into the ICU. Through the reduction of overwhelming experience of performance ambiguity or anxiety, the new graduate will adapt to the fast-paced ICU environment and embody the new ICU RN role. Novice nurses embodying the new role require time, preparation, and support. This study adds to a growing body of knowledge on facilitating the workplace readiness of new ICU nurses from the perspectives of the manager, educator, preceptor, and new graduate. The novice nurse embracing the ICU theory (NNEIT) will provide guidance in resolving the discourse of the competencies and skills for new nurses entering the ICU.
I dedicate this dissertation to my loving mother who brought me from Trinidad to the United States in the hopes of creating greater opportunities. My mother has supported me in all my personal, professional, and educational goals to improve my life. She is my rock who always tells me trust in God and all else will work out. I would like to thank my husband for all of his support and love in the doctoral journey and always telling me everything will be ok. He continued to champion, “You can do it, you’ll get through it”. Thanks to my aunt Marva and goddaughter Nadja for always telling me “You will get through this”. Thanks to all of my family and friends for all of your support and encouragement throughout the doctoral process.

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Mary Joan Berger
Dissertation Title: A COMPARISON OF STUDENTS’ LEARNING OUTCOMES IN VIRTUAL AND TRADITIONAL ENVIRONMENTS IN CALIFORNIA HIGH SCHOOLS

Abstract
The objective of the study was to determine if there were significant differences in learning outcomes between high school students who attended online classes and those attending traditional ones. A quantitative comparative study examined yearly performance levels and learning outcomes of virtual and traditional students through assessments administered by the California State Department of Education. The sample size was dependent on the number of virtual and traditional students taking the state performance tests in English Language Arts and Mathematics. The study used public archival data from the academic year 2008-2009 for each of three virtual and traditional schools from the school districts of Los Angeles, San Diego, and San Mateo. The results from this study of the archival data confirmed that virtual students had achieved acceptable performance levels of learning outcomes in English language arts and Mathematics from the virtual environment. Today’s educational leaders have a critical need to understand the effect of virtual learning outcomes of high school students’ achievements, as more schools are employing this type of learning delivery method. Future researchers could focus on identifying how different types of students might perform better in one of the two learning environments. More research could also determine whether district-level, demographic characteristics, different kinds of assessments and evaluations are connected to the effectiveness of virtual learning environments. Another study approach could examine teacher characteristics, such as training background that would have an impact on the effectiveness of virtual versus traditional learning environments.

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Jeanette Marie Landin
Dissertation Title CAREER COLLEGE STUDENT SUCCESS DEFINITIONS AND ACADEMIC NEEDS AFTER ILLICIT DRUG USE: A NARRATIVE STUDY

Abstract
Many college students have a history of illicit drug use. The purpose of this qualitative narrative inquiry study was to explore the individualized definitions of academic success among career college students with a history of illicit drug use. An exploration of participants’ perceptions of the effects of illicit drugs on their learning and individual educational experiences yielded ideas about student success definitions and needs. Data gathered through participant essays revealed individual experiences and common themes. Findings of this qualitative study included perceptions among participants that learning and cognitive abilities may have been compromised by their illicit drug use. Wavering self-confidence and determination about success potential were reported. Participants cited both internal and external achievements as the hallmarks of their success, including high grades, graduation, internal gratification, and sometimes simply finishing what they started. Suggestions for educational practice and leadership and a model of fulfilling the needs of academic success for students with a history of illicit drug use are included.

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Rhonda P. Sturdavant-Harris  
**Dissertation Title** THE MANAGEMENT OF GENERATION Y IN THE WORKPLACE: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

**Abstract**  
This phenomenological study examined the perceptions of Generation Y and business leaders with respect to expectations and leadership in the workplace. The study will allow educators, researchers, and business leaders to understand the differences between generations and the importance of these differences to the philosophy of an organization. This qualitative phenomenological study used the modified Van Kaam (as cited in Moustakas, 1994) method to analyze transcribed interviews. A sample of 20 participants; 10 students and 10 business leaders was selected based being a Generation Y candidate and business leader in their organizations. The data were analyzed using NVivo 8.0 software to identify themes, analyze the problem, and explore the relevance between perceptions and expectations of Generation Y and business leaders.

**Dedication**  
Dedicated to my grandparents, Oscar and Thelma Johnson, who never doubted my ability to accomplish anything, and would have been proud of my achievement. In loving memory of my sister, Zena R. Hauser, who we sadly lost too soon.

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Charmaine Barnard-Steele  
**Dissertation Title** THE RETENTION OF AFRICAN AMERICAN MALE TEACHERS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

**Abstract**  
African American male teachers were almost nonexistent in many K-12 classrooms across the nation. The challenges classroom educators faced seemed daunting. This research study employed a qualitative research method to understand the reasons African American male K-12 teachers remained in the teaching profession; specifically those who taught in predominantly white schools. Seventy four African American K-12 male teachers who taught in a rural school system in the state of Georgia participated in this research study. The 74 participants all worked at the elementary, middle, and high school level. Several of the participants also worked in an alternative school that served middle and high school students. This research study analyzed reasons African American males gave for staying in the teaching profession by exploring (a) their reasons for entering the profession, (b) their perceived risk factors of the profession, (c) how leaders can increase the number of African American males in classrooms, (d) the role of a diverse faculty, (e) impact of African American male teachers and (f) their reasons for remaining in the profession. The study found African American males who remained in the profession did so because they wanted to be viewed as role models.

**Dedication**  
This dissertation is dedicated to the memory of my mother Elva Jean Wright, who provided me with unconditional love and to my father Andrew Danny Barnard, who believed in me.

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Howard M. Notgarnie
Dissertation Title CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS OF UNITED STATES DENTAL HYGIENE STUDENTS

Abstract
The complexity of decision-making in dental hygienists’ practice requires critical thinking skills. Interest in raising educational standards for entry into the dental hygiene profession is a response to the demand for enhanced professional skills, including critical thinking skills. No studies found in the course of literature review compared dental hygienists or dental hygiene students’ critical thinking skills among different educational levels. The purpose of this comparative, quantitative study was to determine how critical thinking skills differ among three levels of dental hygiene educational programs within the United States, measured by scores on the California Critical Thinking Skills Test (CCTST) attained by students in their final year and the interaction of management experience and age. There was no significant difference in critical thinking skills of United States dental hygiene students among Associate, Baccalaureate, or Master level or interaction of management experience or age with a difference among those program levels. Statistically significant findings were a relationship of the CCTST subscale score inference to management experience, p = .04, and a relationship of management experience to age, p < .01. Implications for dental hygiene professional education and recommendations for further research were discussed.

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