Artifact Narrative Form – Last Updated April 9, 2024

Description of Artifact and <mark>Item Code – T1A2</mark>	Competency Area
Individual Research Construct Visual Presentation on *Afrocentricity*. **[EDU 9002 with Dr. Susie Brigham, MSVU]**	General Knowledge

Competency Area Outcomes
[Broader Competency]
- Students will be required to demonstrate a broad understanding of prominent social scientific and educational theoretical traditions and trends. Students will include artifacts that demonstrate their wide-ranging familiarity with theories related to educational studies.

Statement on how the artifact meets the five competency areas; is it individual or multiauthored?

Prior to conducting educational research, my entire discipline was steeped within a quantitative lens. As a physics educator, I once believed that the positivist tradition, which the quantitative paradigm exists in, was the gold standard for research (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). However, over time and through personal revelations, I realized that quantitative and qualitative approaches have different merits for answering different questions. If researchers are attempting to ascertain statistical trends and patterns, such researchers would lean on hypothesis testing and statistical treatments for data analysis. However, as these scholars have identified, if one wants to understand the how and why questions, qualitative methods best answer these questions.

In order to establish why this artifact is a chosen item for consideration, I draw upon two course readings from the EDU 9005 course with Dr. Corinne Haigh (Acadia). In Dr. Haigh's course, she introduced us to two important readings. The first reading was from Clarke and Visser's (2019) article on the pragmatic research methodology in education. Secondly, Dr. Haigh introduced us to Finlay's (2002) journal on personal reflexivity. Clarke and Visser use the analogy of the swamp from Finlay's journal to describe the methodological mire tied to novice researchers. Due to the inexperience of novice researchers, such beginning investigators may opt to favouring the well-worn, tried and true methodological approaches.

Prior to starting my Master-thesis, my methodological toolbox only contained quantitative approaches. While I had a rudimentary understanding of qualitative methodologies, as I explored further, I realized I could adopt both methodologies. Ultimately, I chose a mixed-methods approach. When the COVID-19 pandemic occurred in March of 2020, my research was put on hold and, it was only in June of 2020 that I decided to pivot. Fortunately, I was introduced to autoethnography. That monumental decision opened a whole new world of different epistemological ways of thinking. Consequently, while the 'ghost of positivism'— a euphemism used by Thomas and Corbett (2018) to explain the "analytic habits and traditions that mark and reflect the positivist legacy" (p. 173) within social sciences— quantitative approaches still influenced my thought processes. However, due to the enormous amount of time I had available due to the pandemic, it provided the necessary opportunity for me to explore something new. Because of this, I came into the PhD program with an open-mind to learn new things.

In one of the major assignments from Dr. Brigham's EDU 9002 course, students were asked to investigate a research construct that we were not familiar with. Having already chosen my PhD dissertation topic, I chose to investigate Afrocentricity as an alternative research methodology. Although I already knew about Colonialism and how it continues to have significant ramifications within our society, I knew little about methodological approaches that challenges the Eurocentric viewpoint around objectivity, reliability and validity within the research process. Because of this powerful learning opportunity, I chose to embed facets of Afrocentricity within my pending dissertation. As I will show in another artifact, this learning opportunity was pivotal in planting the seeds, which blossomed later on into my methodological chapter.

Doctoral Student Outcome(s) Met	Program Objective(s) Met
- **(K):** A <u>sophisticated</u> *[emerging/proficient]* theoretical grasp of the history and philosophy of inquiry in the social sciences and education. - **(K):** A <u>substantive</u> *[excellent]* knowledge of a wide range of methodological approaches to research and attendant methods for data collection and analysis. - **(A):** A keen sense of self-awareness leading to engagement in meaningful reflection about their place in the discipline. - **(S):** Demonstrate full expertise in one or more specific research methods. - **(S):** Demonstrate excellent writing and research skills essential in contemporary scholarly contexts. - **(S):** Communicate effectively, concisely and correctly in written, spoken and visual forms to a variety of audiences using a variety of media. - **(S):** Apply creative and divergent thinking leading to the conception of new ideas and practices with the intention to improve and advance current knowledge (they will be intellectually curious and will value interdisciplinary inquiry).	- **Ensure Integrity and Academic Excellence:** Provide a rigorous learning context that develops the research and intellectual capacities of doctoral candidates to ensure academic excellence and program completion.

Reflective statement about the process and how the item addresses the students' research and/or professional development goals.

In addressing two of the *Doctoral Program Objectives* around the knowledge outcomes, I choose to substitute the terms 'sophisticated' and 'substantive' to that of 'emerging' and 'excellent' respectively. I believe that if I choose the original terms, in essence, I may purposely adopt a mindset which closes off future opportunities for new learning and experiences. Consequently, choosing such terms enables me to have a degree of maneuverability as I academically progress.

Knowledge is power. As I have described within my narrative introduction, a major influence in my life has been around learning and embracing new ideas. While I may not directly utilize Afrocentricity as my chosen methodology for my pending dissertation, understanding different methodological approaches may help me support future aspirational researchers on their own journeys. Professionally, it also allows me to not only appreciate how individuals make sense of the world but, it also allows me to challenge the colonialized and traditional Eurocentric positivistic practices which are often dominated within research and society. Finally, as a practicing educator in a challenging subject area, the art of teaching requires me to communicate difficult ideas so that it becomes accessible for others. This has been a cornerstone of my teaching practice as I attempt to make physics more accessible for all learners. Therefore, I am proud of this artifact as it was made with the intention to introduce others to a whole new methodology by drawing on broader understandings. That way, individuals do not need to undertake a substantive amount of reading and investigation to understand the general underpinnings.

References

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