Artifact Narrative Form – Last Updated April 9, 2024

Description of Artifact and <mark>Item Code – T2A1</mark>	Competency Area
Problem Identification Literature Review of *Exploring the Ideology of Success for Black and African Nova Scotian Learners in High School Science* **[EDU 9004 with Dr. Jennifer Mitton, StFX]**	In-Depth Knowledge

Competency Area Outcomes
[Broader Competency]
- Students will demonstrate an in-depth knowledge of a range of issues in their specific doctoral focus area.

[Specific]
- Literature review leading towards preparation of Dissertation Proposal.
- In-depth scholarly working paper focused on field of study.

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

When I reflect on the journey within the doctoral program, I consider the Problem Identification Literature Review to be my largest undertaking. Fortunately, I have had many amazing and thoughtful mentors who were willing to give up their time to support me in this endeavour. Prior to starting the doctoral program, I realized that one of the gaps I did not explore was the success around Black and Indigenous learners. While I had addressed the issue of racism and discrimination in my Master-level thesis, my participants did not identify themselves as such. Consequently, in narrowing my focus, I chose to explore the circumstances of student success for Black and African Nova Scotian learners. This was a conscious act because at my present school, there has been a sustained effort to develop an Afrocentric cohort in mathematics. As a science teacher, I believe this cohort may extend itself into the sciences. Therefore, I wanted to focus my literature review and pending dissertation on this very topic. That way, I can be equipped with appropriate, in-depth and meaningful professional development, with the hope of being prepared for future teaching.

One of the very significant teachings Dr. Mitton shared was the notion of drawing upon a diversity of perspectives. While there has been a colonization of Eurocentric voices and thoughts, these powerful forces may act as a way to diminish alternative perspectives. Consequently, prior to writing the literature review, I made a sustained effort to investigate literature from mostly Black perspectives. My first priority was to draw upon the local context. Locally, I leaned on scholarly work from multiple Black scholars (see Hamilton-Hinch et al., 2021; Mackey, 2018; Malinen & Roberts-Jeffers, 2021). For National contexts, I drew upon other Black scholars (see Codjoe, 2001, 2006; Dei, 2008). Finally, for American contexts, I utilized works from renowned scholars such as Ladson-Billings (2006, 2021). It is important to address that I limited my investigation to only Canadian-American contexts because, as Hamilton-Hinch et al. identified, the challenges faced by African Nova Scotian and Black learners are also experienced in both nations. One may need to consider the possible cultural influences shared by being geographically neighbours to one another.

During my thesis, I wrote detailed notes on how I conducted the literature review. These notes described what worked, what did not work and what I would change in the future. Positioning myself on these invaluable memos afforded me with the necessary skills to develop a preliminary working model. I leaned into the work of local Black scholars to develop some initial themes. As I conducted research by first examining the local setting, then extending outwards to National and American contexts, I continued to build the model through several iterations, branching off new ideas and perspectives as the model grew. However, because there was a very short time span of three months, I went ahead on writing the initial draft using a model that was not quite ready. However, I am quite proud of the fact that I created a usable first draft in this very short period of time. When I look back at my thesis, the literature review component took about eighteen months from research to first draft.

Doctoral Student Outcome(s) Met	Program Objective(s) Met
(K): A <u>comprehensive</u> *[emerging/proficient]*, detailed and well-founded understanding of educational theory, especially the historical and philosophical study of education. **(K):** In-depth, focused knowledge of several issues in educational studies related to curriculum studies, literacies, lifelong learning, inclusive education, educational foundations and leadership, and psychological aspects of education. **(K):** A <u>thorough</u> *[deep]* understanding of a substantial body of knowledge that is at the forefront of educational studies. **(A):** Respect and appreciation for the scope of the area that they are exploring within the context of the limitations of their own work as well as the discipline of education, including an appreciation for the complexity of knowledge and the political contributions of other interpretations, methods and disciplines. **(A):** Intellectual independence and autonomy to remain engaged and current and be able to evaluate broader implications of applying educational knowledge to complex leadership situations (capacity to be a professional, educational researcher, and leader). **(A):** A keen sense of self-awareness leading to engagement in meaningful reflection about their place in the discipline. **(S):** Apply advanced analytical and creative skills, particularly in relation to theory development, leadership and evaluation. **(S):** Demonstrate excellent writing and research skills essential in contemporary scholarly contexts. **(S):** Use reflective, rational and critical thinking to gather and interpret information in order to form judgments. **(S):** Apply conceptual understanding and methodological competence to: generate new knowledge at the forefront of the field of education, make informed judgments about complex disciplinary issues that might require conceptualizing new methods and perspectives, and produce original research or advanced scholarship that qualifies for peer review and merits publication. **(S):** Undertake pure, applied and/or interpretive research conducted at an advanced level, and apply to knowledge gained in ways that contribute to, advance and push the intellectual boundaries of the discipline. **(S):** Communicate effectively, concisely and correctly in written, spoken and visual forms to a variety of audiences using a variety of media. **(S):** Analyze and solve problems by understanding and synthesizing current knowledge (entails appreciating the relationships between disciplines, ideas and contexts).	**Provide Nova Scotia-based Educational Leadership:** Establish a Nova Scotia-based educational research presence at the doctoral level that is competitive with innovative national and international PhD programs. - Promote a climate of education-related research and advanced study that will develop human resources in the Atlantic region, leading to advanced research base in educational studies in the province and beyond. **Utilize and Augment Existing Research Capacities:** Build upon the existing research capacity and strengths of faculty in education (and other disciplines) to attract, develop and retain high calibre doctoral candidates. **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. **Model Collaboration and Innovation:** Maintain and enhance a comprehensive doctoral program permeated by a culture of collaborative scholarship within a coordinated research community that is marked by innovation and leadership in educational studies.

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

The literature review provided the necessary circumstances to address a multitude of doctoral program and student outcomes. While I cannot embrace a mindset where I have a comprehensive or thorough knowledge of educational theory at the forefront of educational studies, I believe that this is constantly evolving. What I know today eclipses what knowledge I had when entering the program. Therefore, at the heart of this growth has been a continuous devotion to critical self-reflection (i.e., reflexivity). Additionally, I maintained a constant pursuit to learn new things and took advantage of any opportunity to grow, even at the risk of experiencing setbacks. However, this drive has been an important definition of my personal identity as I continue my pursuit within the doctoral program.

Because my pending dissertation revolves around a highly vulnerable and racialized community, it was important to form a committee that would not only be made up of my past mentors but also had invaluable learning experiences. Consequently, I wanted Dr. David Young, Dr. Wendy Mackey and Dr. William Ankomah as my anchor and support in guiding me on this journey. Dr. Young was the sole reason why I was able to sustain achievement within graduate studies. Dr. Mackey also taught me during my Master of Education and has been a guiding figure for at least seven years. Her guidance and her African Nova Scotian perspectives will be invaluable. Finally, as a new faculty member to St. Francis Xavier University, I wanted Dr. Ankomah as a committee member because, as an African-Canadian scholar, his perspectives will be invaluable in this major undertaking.

References

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