

## Preface

The dissertation process across any discipline in the academy can be viewed as high stakes, creative confusion, intellectual empowerment, painstakingly tedious, navigating a forest without a map and/or an excursion on a journey with an assortment of mini maps. The Review of Literature alone can be akin to riding down the longest river that cuts through the development of the topic like the longest river on any continent in the world. In short, the major degree discipline may dictate the knowledge specialization, but this book explores the voices from the field that can provide an encouragement, reflections, suggestions, and a source to contribute to *Creating a Framework for the Preparation of the Dissertation: Emerging Research and Opportunities*.

The professional community of scholars have contributed monumental works on methodology for specific disciplines, writing manuals, handbooks and a plethora of sources that are provided through academic programs of study (Beins, 2018; Breakwell, Hammond, Fife-Schaw, & Smith, 2006; Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2014; Freshwater, 2014; Heiner, n.d.; Kara & Helen, 2015; Le Goff, Nora, & Lucas, 1985; Missing-Value, n.d.; Romaine, n.d.; Skott & Ward, 2012; Sreedharan, 2007; Topolski, 1976; Vansina, n.d.; Weathington, Cunningham, & Pittenger, 2017; “What is Mixed Methods Research? Considering How Mixed Methods Research is Defined,” n.d.; Wheeldon, 2010). However, this edited volume seeks to provide reflective commentary and narrative commentary as well as descriptive ideas from across the academic community to include current and former dissertation chairs, committee members, recent completers of the dissertation journey and the lived experiences that can be used as a supplemental companion resource for the dissertation journey and developmental process.

Perhaps, the metaphor of running two Half Marathons can be offered to conceptualize that the dissertation journey should and can be viewed as a distance run, and it should not be viewed as a sprint. The contributors have constructively

and humanistically provided suggestions for those readers who are at the stage of program consideration, initial admission, coursework completion topic selection, proposal submission, dissertation committee selection, dissertation support systems, dissertation defense and, instructively, for program directors and faculty and administrators anecdotes that can support program success The first Half Marathon is identified as acceptance to the program letter through coursework completion and comprehensive examinations (i.e., this applies to programs that require the comprehensive exam to begin the dissertation process after program coursework completion). The Next Half Marathon is conceptualized to be the actual dissertation process. As with any training schedule or action plan, the objective dictates the discourse and training regimen. As a result, a disclaimer is to acknowledge that the training and preparation for the dissertation process begins and ends with an understanding of the program requirements. The editor and contributors of this volume conceptualize this book as a training aid for the running the Two Half Marathons of the dissertation journey.

## **THE JOURNEY TOWARDS DISSERTATION COMPLETION**

This book seeks to share triumphs versus tragedies and reflections for running the race or traveling through the journey toward creating your holistic framework for dissertation completion. The editor conceptualizes for the purpose of continuity for this project that the process can be arguably divided into stages. These stages are considered as follows:

- **Stage 1:** The Beginning of the Dissertation Journey
- **Stage 2:** Matriculation through Coursework and Research Agenda Discovery
- **Stage 3:** Continued Matriculation with Indecision versus the Discovery of the pathway to Completion

*Stage 1: The Beginning of the Dissertation Journey* in a doctoral program or professional program with a capstone research & Written Requirement The first stage can be described as the excitement of initial Admission to the program and Admiration for your acceptance and expectations that are met or have not been met with a few or lots of regret. The doctoral degree candidate enters the program where the transition through the physical, fiscal, intellectual, spiritual and emotional transactional and/or transformational process will begin with a systematic process of internal expectations versus the external reality of the culture and climate of the program And LIFE.

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*Stage 2: Matriculation through Coursework and Research Agenda Discovery.* The Conceptual Framework of this book profits that during the second stage of the dissertation process, the candidate has come to a phase of Realization and/or Reconsideration of why he/she chose this journey; why he/she chose the doctoral program of record versus the doctoral degree emerging-scholar-in-residence who engages with an emotional and intellectual Reaffirmation within the first 20 percent of the experience (approximately 12 semester hours of a 60 semester hour program. Perhaps, as with a distance run, do I really want to continue this journey or, the internal inquisition that could include the following: Why am I really doing this? Do I really need this degree? What am I going to research for my dissertation? I have so many topics in my head, so how do I pick one? How do I balance my life and this degree program? What do I do with my having family?

*Stage 3: Continued Matriculation with Indecision versus the Discovery of the pathway to Completion.* Continued matriculation through the coursework without a clue of how the end should look versus research as the emerging-scholar-in-residence with passion, purpose and the pursuit of the scientific method through the matriculation process with a mentor and intellectual peers for life. The final stage allows the scholar and potential mentor to recognize the journey of the doctoral degree candidate who builds relationships for self-serving pursuits versus the scholar-in-residence who has a passion, purpose and is in pursuit of scholarship or practitioner- scholarship (the action researcher) with the end in mind-You want to make a difference with the degree.

## **SEARCHING FOR A SOLUTION**

This book will aim to provide relevant lived experiences and frame works from across disciplines and program types that can support the theoretical frameworks and conceptual frameworks of the candidate who receives the delivery of program requirements and the dissertation facilitators of the dissertation process. The objective is to promote a potentially useful book of metaphorical Chapter “Proverbs” that seek to provide realistic encouragement to the professors of the doctoral professionals who are engaged in teaching, mentoring and sharing of how to develop a framework for a collegial research journey as a humanistic facilitator and realistic coach. These anecdotes or research based narrative perspectives will be aimed for consumption by the professor newly assigned to doctoral research advisement, supplemental resources for experienced professors, coaches and graduate program administrators.

Also, the book contributions instigate positive pacing guides of overcoming barriers from the experiences and recommendations of recent doctoral completers/near completers that can lend to a healthy discourse in the developmental process for the doctoral candidate.

Moreover, the objective of this book is to provide realistic inspiration and strategic narrative communication from individual voices on Creating a Framework for the Dissertation Preparation from a holistic conceptual framework as constructed and shared through the diverse lens of those members of the human race. Through the contributors to the book the lived experiences and recommendations of moving through the Conceptual Framework for the book's theme of the Dissertation Journey is running Two Half Marathons that can be presented or viewed, arguably, through the 3 Stages of the Dissertation Journey.

In summary, the primary objective is to reinforce self-care of the doctoral candidate and care for the doctoral chair and committee as members of a research family toward the balancing act needed to complete the dissertation journey from Stage 1 through Stage 3 and/or after completion of the Dissertation Journey. The Conceptual Framework for this book metaphorically seeks to reinforce the preparation process as a distance run. The primary editor has coined the journey as Two Half Marathons of the Dissertation process-Creating a Framework for Dissertation Preparation. The book seeks to lend to a healthy discourse in the developmental process for the doctoral experience that does not lead to bitterness and resentment.

As this volume reaches the world of public consummation, there are transformations with in academic enterprise within the United States and the World. However, the decision to explore the highest educational experience in a professional field comes with internal and external challenges and opportunities (Altbach, Berdahl, Gumport, Monan, & Altbach, 2005; Altbach & Peterson, n.d.; Bok, 2015; Colón Semenza, 2005; Fallon & Fraser, n.d.; Grimes, 2018; Kowalczyk-Wałędziak, Lopes, Menezes, & Tormenta, 2017).

The target audience of this book will be composed of professionals from any discipline that requires a capstone project for degree completion with an emphasis on those who are involved at every level of the dissertation process in programs of study anywhere in the academic world, and researchers working in the fields of educational research, social science research, information and knowledge management in various disciplines, e.g. library, information and communication sciences, administrative sciences and management, education, adult education, sociology, computer science, and information technology etc. Again, the audience should obtain perspectives that may be experiential anecdotes or research based narrative perspectives aimed for consumption by the doctoral candidate, professor newly assigned to doctoral research advisement, supplemental resources for experienced professors, coaches and graduate program administrators.

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Also, the target audience can include online programs and traditional programs seeking to develop a doctoral program and can benefit from this text as a framework for the positive promotion of overcoming barriers from the experiences and recommendations of doctoral chairs, committee members who reside at other universities, methodologists and resent doctoral completers/near completers. The book seeks to lend to a healthy discourse in the developmental process for the doctoral process that does not lead to bitterness and resentment by advancing perspectives on enjoying the journey.

The book's aim is to present chapter perspectives shared for advancement of positive and proactive collaboration, communication and healthy discourse as a Conceptual Model for Creating the Framework for the Dissertation Journey. Furthermore, the book will seek to support those who serve as dissertation chairs, editors, committee members- (i.e. Dissertation Framework Facilitators). Equally significant, the voices from the positively and realistically reflective narrative and examples of running the Two Half Marathons of the Dissertation Journey will be shared from "new docs" (i.e., Operationally, New Docs are those who meet the criteria of having completed the dissertation within the last five years of this publication or those who have recently completed the process of topic selection, prospectus approval, preparation of the dissertation defense.

As such, the book's objective will offer a fresh perspective, possibly co-constructed with the dissertation chair or cohort members, on how the relationship building and personal health are important components from the contributors' experiential descriptions of lesson learned. Consequently, each chapter will seek to reinforce the recommendations for Avoiding the Dissertation Syndrome (the operational Definition for All But Dissertation-ABD).

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE BOOK**

The book is organized into 11 chapters. An overview of each book chapter is offered:

Chapter 1 is titled "Practicing Holistic Health and Self-Care Throughout the Doctoral Program Journey: Practical Applications and Self-Reflections for Doctoral Candidates." This chapter displays a multi-dimensional approach to model six dimensions of interconnected and integrated wellness as bound within a holistic health framework of understanding. An emphasis upon the six dimensions, as well as self-care, is understood as overviews of engagement, while more practical strategies and dimensional application are presented. The intriguing aspect of this chapter is the self-study approach, of one doctoral candidate's journey towards holistic health and self-care.

Chapter 2 is titled “Responding to Critical Feedback by Challenging Pessimistic Attributions: A Cognitive Tool for the Dissertation Journey.” Implementing an ABCDE reflective framework, doctoral candidate anecdotes reflecting critical moments of critical analysis and feedback efforts support the powerfulness of the ABCDE reflectiveness framework as a cognitive tool to assist and sustain the doctoral candidate’s progression through the doctoral capstone journey.

Chapter 3 is titled “Transformation of the Dissertation: From an End-of-Program Destination to a Program-Embedded Process.” The process around dissertation advisement and instructional guidance are imperative to the success of the doctoral candidate throughout the doctoral capstone experience. As such, support documentation such as outlines, sample assignments, timeframes and American Psychological Association Publication Manual guidelines around university expectations towards figures, tables and appendices are offered as procedurally project management guides and associated tools of support.

Chapter 4 is titled “SWOT Analysis of Literature.” The SWOT analytic technique is explained and implemented as a support structure and implementable framework for the review of literature, methodologies, techniques, as well as enhanced engagement towards further study of the research endeavor.

Chapter 5 is titled “Training Partners for the Long Haul: Peer Support in the Dissertation Journey.” This chapter is focused upon supporting the doctoral candidate’s understanding of peer groups as motivational support, as well as ways to work through dysfunctional, unsupportive people in the doctoral candidate’s sphere.

Chapter 6 is titled “The 10 ‘C’s Towards Authentically Supporting Doctoral Students: Gracefully and Successfully Supporting Doctoral Students Towards Completing the Doctoral Capstone Experience.” The chapter embeds an understanding around the needs of doctoral candidates at the capstone stage, framing ten “C”s defined as being: corroborating clarity; championing communication; championing self-regulation; completing calendar timetables; categorizing priorities; continuous motivation; carrying cognitive load concerns; conquering frustration; cognitive vulnerability; and, correcting plagiaristic tendencies. Although these “C”s should be emphasized and supported throughout the doctoral studies, these are especially impactful as social cognitive transformation, all the while offering the cognitive development and engagement in the authorization of a dynamic, industrious developmental system throughout the doctoral coursework that shifts towards a production and implementation system at the stage of the doctoral capstone. Specifically, the learned understandings and engagement throughout the doctoral coursework are then established and must be successfully implemented at the doctoral capstone stage of research engagement.

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Chapter 7 is titled “Be All In.” This chapter focuses upon the successful completion of the doctoral capstone experience, and ultimately the doctoral program, through what is designated as focus, attitude and grit. The relational aspect of this chapter embeds an understanding of the individual’s self-efficacy as described by focus, attitude and grit, with the ultimate attainment of a doctoral candidate’s ability to control one’s own fate by recognizing one’s ability to control aspects of the dissertation process, reflecting resilience and actively engaging in listening to guidance from supportive colleagues and faculty members in their sphere. An intriguing recognition is the understanding of humbleness throughout the dissertation process, from an intelligence quotient as well as an emotional quotient.

Chapter 8 is titled “Reflections of the First Half Marathon as the First Q Methodology Dissertation in the Department.” This chapter reflects the autoethnographic journey of a doctoral candidate’s progressive efforts within a cohort model of engagement and bonding, the implementation of a blended learning environment approach to doctoral coursework experiences that lead into the doctoral capstone engagement, as well as the initial implementation of a methodological approach that may be unusual and uncommon within the doctoral capstone milieu.

Chapter 9 is titled “Developing a Doctoral Identity: Strategies to Help Online Students Move From Student to Scholar.” Doctoral identity is the key focus throughout this manuscript, with understandings around the doctoral candidate’s shifting sense of self-efficacy and identity within the spatial world of professional, personal and academic understanding.

Chapter 10 is titled “Showcasing Dreams, Desires, Vision, Whimsy, Illusion, and Anxious Uncertainty: Understanding Aspects of Perseverance and Determination Towards Doctoral Capstone Successes.” This chapter supports a personalized approach towards the doctoral candidate’s journey, with a recognition of the perseverance and determination personality characteristics that are necessary towards the successful attainment of completion. A sensitivity towards the doctoral candidate’s psychological balance and stressfully destabilizing beliefs around self-efficacy, self-actualization and potentials towards subversion and undermining behaviors of others, are recognized and discussed as aspects of characteristic strengths, weaknesses and potential developmental growth in the doctoral candidate’s personality.

Chapter 11 is titled “Now That You have a Doctoral Degree, What’s Next? Finishing Strong With Professional Development and Mentoring.” This chapter concludes the book’s focused efforts towards supporting the doctoral candidate’s progression through the dissertation phase of the doctoral program of study. A recognition that, once concluded, the newly minted doctorate as welcomed into the

academy does require a progression towards a forward-thinking understanding and support system. Meaning, just because the degree is attained, continued mentorship and professional development is necessary for the colleague to excel. Next steps are discussed, towards moving the scholar forward. This chapter purports to suggest that a second volume should be written related to the post dissertation syndrome.

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