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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| *Signature* | | | |
| Learner Name |  | Mentor Name |  |
| Learner Email |  | Mentor Email |  |
| Learner ID |  | **Date** | 4/29/2020 |

Dissertation Research Plan: QUALITATIVE STUDIES ONLY

Research Plan Process

You will use this form in obtaining approval for Milestones 2-5. The goals of this process are to: (1) facilitate the planning of the details of your dissertation research study, (2) allow for scientific merit review and (3) facilitate your progress through the dissertation. You must obtain approval of your Research Plan before seeking IRB approval, collecting data, and writing your full dissertation or any of your chapters. Approval of the Research Plan satisfies dissertation milestone 5, indicating that the *Dissertation Research Plan* has passed the “scientific merit review,” part of the IRB process.

Scientific Merit Criteria for the Research Plan

1. Advances the scientific knowledge base.
2. Makes a contribution to research theory.
3. Meets certain “hallmarks” of good research methodology.

**\*\*Obtaining Scientific Merit approval for your Research Plan does not guarantee you will obtain IRB approval. A detailed ethical review will be conducted during the process of IRB approval.**

How to Use This Form

This Research Plan form is intended to help you plan the details of your dissertation. It provides a space for you and to work out all the details of your design. Once you have obtained Research Plan approval, you should be able to easily expand on the information you have submitted here and write the dissertation chapters because these sections follow the outline of the Dissertation Chapters 1-3. It is recommended that you use this form in a step-by-step way to help you deign your study. Expect that you will go through several revisions before obtaining approval this form. Research Planning is an iterative process, each revision often sparking the need for further revisions until everything is aligned. These iterations and revisions are a necessary and customary part of the research process.

## Do’s and Don’ts

* Do use the correct form! This RESEARCH PLAN is for QUALITATIVE designs. For a QUANTITATIVE design, use that form.
* Don’t lock the form. That will stop you from editing and revising within the form.
* Do complete the “Learner Information” and Section 1 first.
* Don’t skip items or sections. If an item does not apply to your study, type “NA” in its field.
* Don’t delete the descriptions in the left column!
* Do read the item descriptions carefully. Items request very specific information. Be sure you understand what is asked.
* Do use primary sources to the greatest extent possible as references. Textbooks are NOT acceptable as the only references supporting methodological and design choices. Use textbooks to track down the primary sources.
* **Do submit a revised *Research Plan* if, after approval, you change your design elements. It may not need a second review, but should be on file before your IRB application is submitted.**

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

**Complete the following steps to request Scientific Merit Review (SMR) approval for your dissertation:**

* **Residency Learners: Your Residency Instructor will facilitate this process.**
* **Dissertation Learners: Your Mentor will facilitate this process.**

**Milestone 1**

Milestone 1 consists of completing CITI Research training. Submit your CITI completion certificate to your Residency Instructor or Mentor, who will notify [dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:dissertation@capella.edu) of your completion.

<https://www.citiprogram.org/>

**Milestone 2**

Talk with your Residency Instructor or Mentor about your ideas for your dissertation topic and a possible methodological approach. Collaborate with your Residency Instructor or Mentor to refine your topic into a specific research project that will add to the existing literature on your topic.

Residency Learners:

1. Complete Section 1 of the Research Planform.

* Complete Section 1, “Topic Endorsement,” addressing the Research Topic and Research Problem and submit the form to your Residency Instructor for approval. *Follow the instructions carefully.*
* Collaborate with your Residency Instructor until you have approval for the Section 1, “Topic Endorsement.” After you have received their approval for Section 1, your Residency Instructor will submit this section to your Specialization Chair or Designee for Topic Endorsement via email using the Topic Endorsement Rubric form.
* The Specialization Chair or Designee will notify you and your Residency Instructor of their decision and a copy of the decision will be sent to [Dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:compdisssupport@capella.edu).

2. Complete Sections 2, 3 and 4 of the Research Plan form.

3. Submit Research Plan form for evaluation by your Residency Faculty for Final Project in Track 2.

Dissertation Learners:

1. Complete Section 1, “Topic Endorsement” and Section 2, “Research Overview” and submit the form to your Mentor for approval. *Follow the instructions carefully.*

2. Collaborate with your Mentor until you have approval for the Section 1, “Topic Endorsement” and Section 2, “Research Overview.” After you have received their approval for Section 1 and 2, your Mentor will submit this section to your Specialization Chair or Designee for Topic Approval via an email to [dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:dissertation@capella.edu).

3. The Specialization Chair or Designee will notify [dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:dissertation@capella.edu) of their decision and your mentor will be informed so they can communicate the decision to you.

4. If your Topic is deferred by the Specialization Chair or Designee, work with your Mentor to address the concerns and resubmit per process above.

5. If your Topic is approved by the Specialization Chair or Designee, Milestone 2 is achieved. Proceed to Milestone 3.

**Milestones 3, 4 and 5**

Residency Learners:

1. Work with your Track 3 Residency Instructor to make any necessary refinements to sections 2, 3, and 4 of the Research Plan, then complete Section 5 and 6 of the Research Plan. Make sure all sections are aligned—changes in one section could necessitate changes in another section.

2. After you have a polished version, you should review the SMR criteria from the rubric for each section, to ensure you have provided the requisite information to demonstrate you have met each of the scientific merit criteria.

3. Submit the completed form to your Residency Instructor for approval at the end of Track 3.

\*\*\****Residency Instructors are also SMR Reviewers. If your Residency Instructor approves your Dissertation Research Plan, and you meet the grading criteria for Track 3 (85 in the course, 85 on the final assessment, and “Proficient” on each item on the rubric for the final assessment), you have achieved Milestones 3, 4, and 5. When you start Dissertation after Comprehensive Exam, you will work with your assigned Mentor to gain IRB approval of your study. You may begin working on your IRB application in preparation for the next steps of your Dissertation.***

Dissertation Learners:

1. Complete sections 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the Research Plan. Make sure all sections are aligned—changes in one section could necessitate changes in another section.

2. After you have a polished version, you should review the SMR criteria from the rubric for each section, to ensure you have provided the requisite information to demonstrate you have met each of the scientific merit criteria.

3. Submit the completed form to your Mentor for approval.

4. After you have obtained Mentor approval (Milestone 3) of the completed *Dissertation Research Plan* form, your Mentor will submit the completed form to your Dissertation Committee for approval. Expect that you will go through several revisions before attaining approval of your Dissertation Research Plan.

5. After you have obtained Dissertation Committee approval (Milestone 4) of the *Dissertation Research Plan* form, your Mentor will submit the completed form to the SMR Committee for approval by sending it to [dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:dissertation@capella.edu).

**\*\*\*Mentor and Dissertation Committee approval does not guarantee SMR Committee approval. Each review is independent and serves to ensure that your *Dissertation Research Plan* demonstrates research competency.**

*SMR Review Process*

The scientific merit reviewer will review each item against a rubric to determine whether you have met each of the criteria. You must meet all the criteria at a level of “Proficient” or greater to obtain reviewer approval. The reviewer will designate your *Dissertation Research Plan* as one of the following:

* Approved
* Deferred for minor or major revisions
* Disapproved
* Not ready for review

If the *Dissertation Research Plan* has been *deferred:*

* The SMR reviewer will provide feedback on any criteria that you have not met.
* Your mentor is required to meet with the SMR Research Help Desk to discuss the deferral and develop a plan for guiding the revisions.
* You are required to make the necessary revisions and obtain approval for the revisions from your Mentor.
* Once you have Mentor approval for your revisions, your Mentor will submit your *Dissertation Research Plan* for a second review.
* You will be notified if your *Dissertation Research Plan* has been approved, deferred for major or minor revisions, or disapproved.
* Up to **three** attempts to obtain Scientific Merit Review (SMR) approval are allowed. Researchers, Mentors, and Reviewers should make every possible attempt to resolve issues before the *Dissertation Research Plan* is deferred for the third time. If a researcher does not pass the scientific merit review on the third attempt, then the case will be referred to the Research Chair and/or Program Chair in your School for review, evaluation, and intervention.
* While you await approval of your *Dissertation Research Plan,* you should be working to complete your IRB application and supporting documents.
* Once you have gained SMR approval (Milestone 5), you are ready to submit your IRB application and supporting documents for review by the IRB Committee.

**Milestone 6**

1. IRB Approval:

* Once you obtain SMR approval, complete your **IRB application** and accompanying materials.
* Consult the Research and Scholarship area within iGuide for IRB forms and detailed process directions.
* You are required to obtain scientific merit approval (SMR) before you may receive IRB approval. **Obtaining SMR approval does not guarantee that IRB approval will follow.**

**Milestone 7**

7. Complete the Pre-Data Collection Conference call:

* Once you have gained approval by the IRB, you are ready to schedule your Pre-Data Collection Conference Call. You may not proceed to data collection until you have completed this call.
* Work with your Mentor and Dissertation Committee to set a date for the conference call.
* Upon successful completion of the Pre-Data Collection Conference Call, your mentor will mark Milestone 7 complete, and you may proceed with data collection.

PRELIMINARY INFORMATION

Learners, please insert your answers directly into the expandable boxes that have been provided!

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| **A. Learner and Specialization Information**  **(to be completed by Learner)** | |
| **Learner Name** |  |
| **Learner Email** |  |
| **Learner ID Number** |  |
| **Mentor Name** |  |
| **Mentor Email** |  |
| **Specialization** | Curriculum and Instruction |
| **Specialization Chair Name** |  |
| **Specialization Chair Email** |  |
| **Committee Member #1 Name** | Dr. Claire Boyce |
| **Committee Member #1 Email** |  |
| **Committee Member #2 Name** |  |
| **Committee Member #2 Email** |  |
| **Methodology** | **QUALITATIVE** |
|  | Research design – descriptive case study |
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| **Section 1. Topic Endorsement** | | |
| **1.1 Research Topic (2 paragraphs)**  FIRST PARAGRAPH: Describe the specific topic to be studied.  SECOND PARAGRAPH: describe the significance of this topic to your program/field (e.g., Psychology, Counseling, Business, Technology, Public Service Leadership, Education, etc.) AND your specialization within your program.  **The Research Topic should be correctly formed:**   * **The Research Topic should be appropriate for the specialization.** * **The Research Topic should use appropriate language for key concepts/phenomena.** * **Relationships between/among the concepts should be clearly specified (e.g., correlation).** * **The target population should be named** * **The concepts should be appropriately focused.** * **Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements.** * **Use APA style in citing all resources.** | The topic to be studied is student engagement as clarified by Lekwa and Shernoff (2019). Academic engagement encompasses both active and passive academic concentration. Ndemanu and Jordan (2018) suggested that African immigrant children often encounter challenges with developing focused concentration when attending public schools. Studies including research by Watson and Knight (2017) as well as Kumi-Yeboah, Brobbe and Smith (2019) have settled that within the context of educational conversations surrounding immigrant students, African-born immigrant youth mostly go unnoticed, which adds to their inconspicuousness. This study by Kumi-Yeboah, Brobbe, and Smith (2019) points out that due to their racial and ethnic backgrounds, they may be seen as African Americans/Blacks in the U.S. mainstream culture and remain unnoticed in the U.S. educational system and are largely ignored in the immigrant educational literature (Rasmussen, 2015).  Aydin, Ozfidan and Carothers (2017) recommended that schools must change the structures, culture, and programs of curriculum and instruction to meet the needs of a diverse student body.  Studies have shown that the field of curriculum and instruction rotates around the benefits of teaching to students. Research by Groccia (2018), pointed out that although the ambiguity in the term may account for some difficulties in implementing educational policy to support student engagement, there is little doubt about the impact on student learning and institutional effectiveness.  [As a corollary](https://www.powerthesaurus.org/as_a_corollary) , Kluth, Straut, Biklen, and ProQuest Ebooks (2003) welcomed teachers in diverse, inclusive schools to push past enabling social participation in classroom activities and reflect on ways to intellectually engage all learners. Curriculum and instruction are the essence of the educational process. Actual reform in education is accompanied by changes in the instructional content taught and the substance students acquire, and in the instructional methods that teachers use (McDonnell, McLaughlin, Morison, netLibrary (OCLC), & ProQuest EBooks, 1997).  Active engagement signifies the degree to which students focus on tasks and participate clearly during lessons. Passive engagement denotes cognitive responsiveness to applicable instructional stimuli (Lekwa & Shernoff, 2019).  The degree to which students are actively or passively engaged is a critical foundation for learning. Therefore, minus academic engagement, it is not certain that students will gain from instruction (e.g., Gettinger & Seibert, 2002; Singh, Granville, & Dika, 2002).  The current research topic is academic engagement strategies for recent sub-Saharan African immigrants. The key concepts involve the experiences of teachers who have employed various teaching and learning strategies to enhance student engagement with recent sub-Saharan African immigrants in urban high schools located in the northeast region. | |
| **1.2 Research Problem (1 Paragraph)**  Write a brief statement regarding the **need for the study** that fully describes the problem or need being addressed. The “need for the study” is what we often refer to as the Research Problem.  In simplified terms, the research problem should take this form:  “The research literature on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ indicates that we know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, but we do not know \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.”  **These Research Problem should be correctly stated:**   * **Existing literature and key findings should be summarized** * **Gaps or problems in the existing literature should be clearly formulated** * **The Research Problem should be explicitly stated, not implied.**   .  **• Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements.**  **• Use APA style in citing all resources.** | Research by Harbour, Evanovich, Sweigart, and Hughes (2015) posited that the distinct components of school engagement are interrelated and constitute a dynamic process that influences student learning and achievement. Harbour et al. (2015) found that when teachers use real practices, students are likely to be actively engaged in instruction.  Although the literature supports the potential of good- quality teacher-student relationships and quality instruction in improving student engagement (Harbour, Evanovich, Sweigart and Hughes, 2015; Quin, 2017), little is known about successful engagement strategies for recent sub-Saharan African immigrants.  Kumi-Yeboah, Brobbey, and Smith (2019) explored some factors that facilitate acculturation strategies and academic success of west African immigrant youth in urban schools. The authors acknowledged that immigrant youth from West African countries are not homogenous. Their diverse ethnic, linguistic, religious, and geographic backgrounds make it challenging to examine the educational experiences of immigrant youth from all 54 countries constituting this population (Watson & Knight, 2017). In addition to gathering the experiences of participants from only 2 nations, (Ghana and Nigeria) the study also did not explore the experiences of teachers who have been successful in engaging recent sub-Saharan immigrants. This was one of the putative limitations of the study. Furthermore, Kumi-Yeboah et al. (2019) believed that the sample was too selective and small to be transferable to the wider population of sub-Saharan African immigrant students. Besides, West African immigrant students come from different countries with varied educational, psychological, personal, and sociocultural experiences, including social diversity (Kumi-Yeboah et al.2019). | |
| **RESIDENCY LEARNERS ONLY:**  Specialization Chair Topic Endorsement   * After completing Section 1, “Topic Endorsement,” addressing the Research Topic and Research Problem, submit the form to your Residency Instructor for approval. *Follow the instructions carefully.* * Collaborate with your Residency Instructor until you have approval for the Section 1, “Topic Endorsement.” After you have received their approval for Section 1, your Residency Instructor will submit this section to your Specialization Chair or Designee for Topic Endorsement via email using the Topic Endorsement Rubric form. * The Specialization Chair or Designee will notify you and your Residency Instructor of their decision and a copy of the decision will be sent to [Dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:compdisssupport@capella.edu). | | |
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| **Section 2. Research Overview** | | |
| **2.1 Research Problem Background (3 paragraphs)**  Provide a brief SUMMARY of your review of the research literature on the topic. This should include citations from at least 10 articles but should indicate that you have performed a full review of the literature (minimum of 75 articles) on the topic. This should be demonstrated by providing a statement about the body of existing literature on the topic, then, summarizing recent research findings on the topic, highlighting the findings that are most relevant to your proposed study, demonstrating how your proposed research could add to the existing literature on the topic. Be sure to provide appropriate in text citations and include references in the reference section.  **• Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements.**  **• Use APA style in citing all resources.**  **• This will not be your full dissertation literature review but an initial foundation. You will continue to add to your literature review throughout your dissertation process.** | Although fewer black Africans from Africa (sub-Saharan Africans) have been admitted since the slave trade era, compared to blacks from Jamaica and South American nations, there has been a recent surge of recent arrivals from Africa as evidenced from the US Census Bureau (2014, Release Number CB 14-148).  The US Census Bureau (2014) reported that the foreign-born population from Africa has grown rapidly in the United States during the last 40 years, increasing from about 80,000 in 1970 to about 1.6 million in the period from 2008 to 2012. Many arrived in this country relatively recently. The report conveyed that the population has roughly doubled each decade since 1970, with the largest increase happening from 2000 to 2008-2012. No African country makes up the majority of these immigrants, but four countries — Nigeria, Ethiopia, Egypt and Ghana (all sub- Saharan countries except Egypt) — make up 41 percent of the African-born total, the report states. This is in line with the conclusion of *Migration Policy* that Sub-Saharan or black Africans make up 82 percent of the 2.1 million immigrants from Africa, the remainder coming from North Africa. The current flow of sub-Saharan Africans consists of skilled professionals, individuals seeking reunification with relatives, and refugees from war-torn countries (Migration Policy, 2014).  Some studies have found Black Africans are among the fastest-growing groups of US immigrants, increasing dramatically in recent years. A significant number of sub-Saharan Africans migrate by [rejoining](https://www.powerthesaurus.org/rejoining/synonyms) their families; but Black Africans increasingly utilize other additional avenues of immigration such as admission as refugees or through the Diversity Visa program (Ngwainmbi, 2014; Capps, McCabe & Fix, 2011).  The expectancy is that recent immigrants will completely blend into the host country. This was the basis of two studies conducted by Roblain, Azzi, & Licata,(2016) in order to understand why the perception of host culture adoption by immigrants is generally well perceived by majority members.  Until now, with the present-day widespread and improved communication and networking, it is safe to assume that migrants will find it easier to maintain different sociological and geographical relationships between their home countries and their host. Increasingly, African and other immigrants to the United States do not have to fully integrate. They have become transnational families (Yount-André, 2018). They do not have to live social, economic, and political lives in ethnic enclaves, rather they operate within ethnospaces (Graves & Rechniewski, 2015) which may no longer tightly territorialized or spatially bounded.  These immigrants now come with families who are school-age children. Their educational needs are quite distinct. Kanu (2008) pointed out their unique difficulty with integration due to their phenotype, ethnicity, and linguistic and religious backgrounds. The linguistic issues are even more complex because of the overabundance of ethnic and European languages spoken across Africa that have influenced the emergence of varied Englishes with varying accents and proficiencies (Kigamwa, & Ndemanu, 2017).  A study by the U.S. Bureau of Census (2000) indicated that African immigrants have had the highest educational attainment rates of all immigrant groups in the United States. However, as pointed out by Knight, Roegman, & Edstrom (2016), there exits generational differences in immigrant educational attainment. Researchers have found that voluntary immigrants have a positive outlook toward education that correlates with achievement, in comparison with involuntary immigrants, such as descendants of enslaved Africans ([Ogbu & Simons, 1998](https://journals-sagepub-com.library.capella.edu/doi/10.1177/0013124515589596)).  According to Parsons, Nuland, and Parsons (2014), researchers concede that student engagement is more intricate than just visible behaviors. Examples cited in the study demonstrate that behavioral engagement and cognitive engagement are not the same. In light of the claim held by Parsons et al. (2014) that an administrator may hold a different view of engagement from the newer construct, it means that educators and researchers may not always be speaking with one voice. It is therefore important to gain an understanding of educators’ perspectives on student engagement.  Student engagement is intricate not just in its description, but most especially how educators’, administrators’ and researchers’ views differ on the subject. | |
| **2.2 Research Question**  List the primary Research Question.    **Your Research Question (s) should be correctly formed:**   * **The Research Question(s) should be aligned with your Research Problem, the Research Topic, and the Dissertation Title.** * **The Research Question(s) should be phrased in a way that it can be answered by the intended methodology and analyses.**   • **Define the terms of the research question referencing the definitions with references from the literature.** • Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. **• Use APA style in citing all resources.** | **Research Questions**  What are the experiences of teachers who have been successful in engaging recent sub-Saharan African immigrants in learning?  **Research Sub-Questions**  What instructional and learning activities do instructors design to engage recent sub-Saharan African immigrants in the learning content?  What obstacles do teachers report when implementing teaching and learning strategies focused on student engagement?  Lekwa and Shernoff (2019) have pointed out that the degree of student attention and participation in learning activities constitutes student engagement. They also point out that engagement can be active (focusing on tasks and participating) as well as passive (intellectual responsiveness to applicable instructional spurs). | |
| **2.3 Purpose of the Study**  State the purpose of the study. The purpose of the study will be to answer the research question in order to solve the research problem and to contribute information about the wider social or community problem to a specific audience or audiences.  Note:  Describe the purpose using the language of your specific study, topic, research problem, and research question. | The purpose of the study is to comprehend instructional strategies as described by teachers who have been successful in engaging recent African immigrants in urban high schools in a **coastal state** located in the [northeast region](https://www.bing.com/search?q=Northeastern+United+States&filters=sid%3a6ed71c45-4329-5eee-5977-904773e5a5ad&form=ENTLNK). Additionally, the study will appreciate the apparent ambiguity surrounding student engagement among researchers. Student engagement takes many forms and because is used to refer to so many different things that it is difficult to know what people mean by the term (Groccia, 2018). There are more questions raised by the subject as evidenced by Buskist and Groccia (2018) who have raised the question of the existence of universal principles of instilling student engagement that apply across students, disciplines, and institutional settings. The study also questioned if these principles are similar or different in the domains of doing, feeling, and thinking; what are the most effective methods of keeping students engaged? (Buskist, & Groccia, 2018). The current study seeks to elucidate these concepts. The findings from the study might be disseminated to school leaders striving to engage recent African immigrants in some urban school districts. | |
| **2.4 Methodology and Basic Design Overview**  Provide an overview of the basic research methodology and the research model proposing. Also state how this methodology is a good fit for the question being asked and the phenomena being studied.   * Describe the qualitative methodology (for example phenomenology) and research model (for example Giorgi – empirical phenomenology or Moustakas – transcendental phenomenology) you propose to use.  Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements.Use APA style in citing all resource. | Methodology  Qualitative  Merrian and Tisdell (2016) stated that the most common type of qualitative inquiry in applied fields of practice such as education, administration, health, social work, counseling, business is a basic interpretive study. The authors backed the definition of qualitative research as a cover phrase for an array of interpretive skills aimed at describing, decrypting and translating or explaining certain natural happenings in the world around us.  Therefore, they argue, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed, that is how people make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).  Merriam and Tisdell (2016) found that most qualitative research focuses on process, understanding, and meaning. The leading method of collecting and analyzing data is the investigator: it is a purely inductive practice: and the outcome is abundantly vivid.  The study aims at gathering rich descriptive experiences from teachers who have successfully engaged recent sub-Saharan immigrants academically. The objective is to understand the experiences of academic engagement as described by these participants. In this study, we intend to understand how educators interpret what they experience.  Research design – [descriptive case study  The approach delivered by case study methodology allows the development of an in-depth, multi-dimensional survey of the dissertation topic across and within the real-life setting.  The case study methodological approach aims to investigate real-life concerns and phenomena across its environmental context. Case study methodology avoids the use of samples as a representation of the larger community or population in a research study. The application of case study methodology is directly related to the interest of investigating the case because of the impact it has on the field of study and the desire to alter the existing phenomenon.  Creating a detailed data collection strategy through interviews, and observations will use to triangulate relevant information for the study. | |
| * 1. **Dissertation Title**   **Your Dissertation Title should be correctly formed:**   * **Dissertation Title should be aligned with your Research Problem (1.2) and Research Question (2.2), (use the same terminology for all).** * **The Dissertation Title should reflect the key variables or constructs to be studied.** * **The Dissertation Title should reflect the method to be employed in the research.** * **The Dissertation Title should be concise (12 words or less).** | Educators’ descriptions of academic engagement strategies for recent sub-Saharan African immigrants. | |

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| **DISSERTATION LEARNERS ONLY:**  **Specialization Chair Topic Approval**  **(To be completed by Specialization Chair/Designee**  **after Section 1 and 2 are approved by Faculty Mentor)** | |
| **Chairs:** Please insert your electronic signature to certify that the Research Topic is appropriate for your specialization and return to [dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:dissertation@capella.edu). | Signature:  Date:  Comments: |

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| **Section 3.** Research Theory | |
| **3.1** Advancing Scientific Knowledge  Demonstrate how the study (a) will advance the scientific knowledge base; (b) is grounded in your field; and (c) addresses something that is not known, something that is new or different from prior research, something that extends prior research, or something that fills a gap in the existing literature. Describe precisely how your study will add to the existing body of literature on your topic. It can be a small step forward in a line of current research, but it must add to the body of scientific knowledge in your specialization area and on the topic.  To respond to this question you will need to:   1. Provide a paragraph that describes the background for your study and how your research question relates to the background of the study. 2. Then, in a second paragraph discuss previous research and demonstrate exactly how your study (answering research question) will advance the scientific knowledge base on this topic. Include in-text citations and place the references in the reference section.  • Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. • Use APA style in citing all resources. | Many researchers have discussed on the need for educational policy makers, administrators and teachers focusing more on African-immigrant learners, by considering their unique educational experiences and needs (Roubeno et al. 2015; Okpalaoka, 2011). Additionally, past studies have focused on the existing racial and ethnic pattern formations, cultural adaptations, socio-cultural modification, alongside linguistic challenges that affect the African immigrant students in the US (Allen, Jackson, & Knight, 2012). Furthermore, there is a significant trend in researchers getting interested in understanding the connection and impact on the role of academics in the livelihood of most African citizens and their reception and engagement in educational outcomes. The most noticed trend is the uniqueness of the ethnic and social background of recent African immigrants in the model of academic instructions and delivery. For instance, the sub-Saharan people have a complex education system compared to the one administered in the United States. It has been described as a triple heritage or a biproduct of African indigenous tradition, European and Arabia/Islam (Njoh, Ananga, Anchang, et al., 2017). According to the US Census Bureau (2014), the flow of immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa has led to an increase in the number of immigrants from countries such as Nigeria, Ethiopia, Ghana, and Egypt. Therefore, with the continued increase in migration of sub Saharan African immigrants feeding US urban schools with distinct learners, it has become urgent to explore the factors that account for academic engagement of this population. Indeed, studies, including those of Aydin, Ozfidan & Carothers (2017), urged that schools must change the structures to meet the needs of a diverse student body.  Within the context of educational conversations surrounding immigrant students, African-born immigrant youth mostly fall through the cracks of education. Studies have failed to mention the learning resources, activities, or [policies.to](http://policies.to/) ensure that sub-Saharan immigrants fit the current academic systems. There is a huge gap that needs to be filled by the learning institutions and the government to aid in understanding how the blending occurs since academics are part of incorporating and understanding a new culture.  Numerous research studies have in-depth discussions and evaluation of the adaptation of immigrants based on cultural adaptations, socio-cultural modification, and fights related to ethnic and racial discriminations (McHugh, Sugarman 2015). However, there is a gap in the concrete evaluation of immigrant students and their involvement in academic engagement such as facing linguistic challenges and following different learning curriculum (Dryden-Peterson 2015). In a research study conducted to analyze the engagement of students at an academic level, Harbour et al. (2015) found that discrimination, language barrier, and cultural differences are among the challenges faced by most immigrants living in new states. Students within a country suffer a significant impact in case they shift from one school to the other within the same country (Adair 2015). Similarly, for the immigrant student, the impact on their academic engagement is even greater and can directly affect their academic success.  **Research Questions**  ***Question 1***  What are the experiences of teachers who have been successful in engaging recent sub-Saharan African immigrants in learning?  ***Question 2***  What instructional and learning activities do instructors design to engage recent sub-Saharan African immigrants in the learning content? |
| **3.2 Theoretical Implications**  Describe any theoretical implications that the proposed study may have for understanding phenomena. For example, will the study generate new theory, provide a description of the lived experience of the participants or provide a description of a cultural phenomenon?   • Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. • Use APA style in citing all  resources. | Two focal Theories suited the topic of student engagement are Robert Gagne: Conditions of Learning and Lev Vygotsky: Social Development Theory and ZPD. Gagne’s theory has not only improved practice, but the resulting theoretical implications have also formed the basis for other researchers to develop new theories for diverse students.  Gagne’s theory supports the strong relationship between theory and practice as was typical with his initial research. Considering the attention researchers have paid to the application of Gagne’s theory to practice, the theory is noteworthy to such dependencies. The work of Battersby (1987), Huberman (1990) and Willis (1993) make up some examples of researchers who have gained high ranking among researchers who emphasize that good theory is worth applying to practice while exemplary practice in education should become the foundation for the development of new theory.  Gagne’s extended thoughts in the nine instructional events detail all the conditions that would necessitate learning. The nine events have historically been used in designing instruction and selecting appropriate media. As such, Gagne’s contribution to instructional design has been prominent since the 1960s when he theorized the hierarchical sequencing of instruction for knowledge acquisition. For instance, a quasi-experimental study by Dahiru (2013) to evaluate the effects of using Gagne’s learning hierarchy on the achievement of Chemistry students revealed that students taught using instructions based on the theory had low levels of anxiety in the classroom and they performed better than those taught using lecture method. Such studies inspired by Gagne’s theory are valuable tools for researchers to gauge instructional models that will help learners understand abstract or complex concepts in the classroom.  Vygotsky’s idea of proximal development has created the basis for cognitive development research. It implies that teachers should assist learners to move through this zone. This requires more knowledgeable other, social exchanges with an adept tutor that allow the learner to observe and practice their talents and supportive activities provided by the instructor. Botty and Shahrill (2014) have argued that Vygotsky’s theory plays a key role in improving the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process. In Vygotsky’s view, the ZPD is the aperture between the growth levels as determined by independent problem solving under guidance or in cooperation with more proficient peers (Small, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978). Therefore, the theory has helped in designing studies that highlight the role of student-centered pedagogy. Vygotsky’s theory has also informed research about how educators can model the context of learning to produce design frameworks that have been applied across various educational settings. For instance, scaffolding tools can be used as a mediating tool to mediate understanding with learners from different backgrounds. These mediating tools can be signs and symbols, language and even beliefs acting within the ZPD for the immigrant K-12 students.As immigrant children relocate to the United State, many factors could hinder their educational progress in their new countries. Therefore, their learning may not be as effective as those students born in the country. To apply the concept of the ZPD, researchers investigate how teachers could provide instructions in small steps based on what tasks each child can already handle independently. |
| **3.3 Practical Implications**  Describe the practical implications that may result from your research. Specifically, describe any implications the research may have for understanding phenomena for practitioners, the population being studied, or a particular type of work, mental health, educational, community, stakeholders or other setting. Relate these back to the your Research Problem. • Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. • Use APA style in citing all resources. | Gagné's learning theories have had a positive influence on the evolution of the systems approach to designing instruction. Science is the most common example of a large-scale application of Gagne’s theories and research to a curriculum project. During the 1960s and 1970s, science curriculum majorly utilized Gagne’s theories to solve problems in instruction. However, not all researchers believed Gagne’s theory had a positive contribution to science curriculum. For example, Finiley (1983) argued that the theories by Gagne and other like-minded researchers pushed science curriculum in the wrong direction by supporting widespread commitment to inductive empiricism. From a philosophical angle, Finiley (1983) believed that Gagne and most of his predecessors largely embraced the positions of empiricism. Other than their application to science, Gagne’s theories are also important in the public-school setting. Hackett (1971) provided some evidence supporting the application of Gagne’s theories to math and social studies although she directed much of her work toward communication and reading skills curricula. Most of her curricula projects were guided by a performance-based approach. This approach shares many similarities with the outcome-based education that was central to learning in the 1980s and 1990s. Also, in that category is the research by Smaldino and Thompson (1990) who explained the role of Gagne’s theories to science education and computer technology. These and many examples of low-level curriculum development projects such as Gilbert (1992) and an adaptation by Flynn (1992) can be applied directly to contemporary research and curriculum development.  Based on the proposed research topic, teachers at the K-12 level are more obliged to design instruction although their involvement is at a lower level and less formal than professional designers (Ilie, 2014). Therefore, K-12 teachers receiving exposure to instructional design as they participate in education courses utilizing Gagne’s theories have a significant influence on the course design these teachers engage while progressing through their careers. Currently, the high proportion of American pre-service teachers taking media and methods courses indicates the actual positive impacts of adapting Gagne’s theories and models in practice despite being less systematic and formalized.  The nine events of instructions permit instructors to show attention to the learners, chat with them, support them, and consider their feelings and problems. Kumi-Yeboah, Brobbe, and Smith (2019) have settled that within the context of educational conversations surrounding immigrant students, African-born immigrant learners mostly go unnoticed, which adds to their inconspicuousness. The authors pointed out that due to their racial and ethnic backgrounds, they may be seen as African Americans/Blacks in the U.S. mainstream culture and remain unnoticed in the U.S. educational system and are largely ignored in the immigrant educational literature. Conditions of learning theory enhances rigor and impact of findings in teacher education studies. To Gagne, learning is an activity performed by the learner. Teachers cannot substitute their activity for the role of their students. However, educators can provide appropriate conditions that allow African immigrant students to learn more and with ease. Research guided by the framework of Conditions of Learning theory informs the best classroom practices by allowing the investigation of different instructional models and their impacts on expected educational outcomes regardless of student demographics.  Vygotsky’s notion of social learning contrasts with the popular ideas of other theorists such as Piaget. The difference in assumptions of various theories has major implications for learning instructional design and development. For instance, believing Vygotsky’s concept that learning drives development and that as one learns new concepts and principles, he or she develops and begins to recognize the applicability of new tasks, then a different instructional design would be needed. Therefore, Vygotsky’s social learning theory ensures that instructional activities are structured to promote individual learning and development for individual students (Vygotsky, 1978).  Another contemporary application of social learning theories for k-12 teachers and instructional designers is identifying authentic contexts. The biggest challenge for k-12 students is usually to identify authentic contexts for effective learning.With immigrants and students from various backgrounds in the classroom, it is important to take different learning pace and students’ prior knowledge into account. Unless students are effectively engaged and challenged in their learning, they might quickly lose attention. At the same time, they might give up if the task is too difficult. Understanding the concept of a ZPD allows teachers to plan a more strategic approach both for individual or group instruction. Based on these differences among learners, curriculum development and instruction cannot be designed using a one-size-fits-all approach. Therefore, Vygotsky’s social learning theory is an opportunity for teachers to modify classroom activities such that they are always authentic to their learners.  When comparing Vygotsky’s theory and Gagne’s theory in terms of implications for instruction and applications in the real world, it is easy to identify similarities. However, for investigating effective instructional and learning activities for k-12 immigrant students in the U.S., Gagne’s theory is preferred. Applying Gagne’s nine-step model is considered a superior way to ensure systematic learning program capable of giving not only a holistic view to teaching but also structure to lesson plans. Importantly, research by Onodipe, Ayadi, and Marquez (2016) showed that several institutions that provide online courses use Gagne's 9 events of instruction for course design have found it to be effective. Besides, Ullah, Rehman, and Bibi (2015) assessed the effects of using Gagné's events of instructions in a multimedia student-centered environment and found their results positive and encouraging. They showed the positive role of these events in a more constructivist situation. |

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| Section 4. Research Methodology | |
| **4.1 Research Design**  Describe the qualitative design (for example grounded theory) and research model (for example Strauss and Corbin or Charmaz – constructivist grounded theory) you propose to use, supported and referenced by primary sources. Describe in detail the method(s) will you use to collect the data, such as: structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews, journaling, letters, pictures, observations, field notes, focus groups. Describe the philosophy underlying the methodology and model.  Briefly describe how the study will be conducted. (Describe how you are going to carry out the study.)   * **The Research Design should be clearly identified.** * **The Research Design ishould be appropriate to the Research Question.**  \*Use primary sources as resources to support statements. • Use APA style in citing all resources. | * Research philosophy - [interpretivism] * Research design – [descriptive case study] * Research approach – [inductive] * Research method - [Qualitative] * Research strategy [Survey] * Data collection instrument – [Interviews] * Data analysis – [Thematic analysis] * Data for qualitative research is derived from interviews, observations, or documents   Merriam and Tisdell (2016) described a research method that will be used, named the Basic Qualitative Method. The study postulates that qualitative research is based on the belief that knowledge is constructed by people in an ongoing fashion as they engage in and make meaning of an activity, experience, or phenomenon. One chief feature of qualitative studies is that persons form actuality in interactions with their community. The theoretical basis of this is constructivism. This is the foundation of a basic qualitative study as conceptualized by Merriam and Tisdell (2016). Here the investigator’s goal is to comprehend the meaning of a phenomenon for those concerned.  In the current study, the meaning of engagement is not discovered but will be constructed by the teachers that are interviewed. The emergent themes that will result from the codes of the interviews will become the basis of the meaning of student engagement of recent sub-Saharan African immigrants.  Merriam and Tisdell (2016) submitted that the investigator carrying out a basic qualitative study would be keen on how individuals unravel their experiences, (2) how they explain their spheres, and (3) what sense they make out of their experiences. Apart from interviews data for this study will come from observations. The data analysis will include detecting repeated trends and or ideas that stamp the data. Discoveries are these repeated trends and ideas reinforced by the data from which they were developed. The global interpretation will be the investigator’s reading of the phenomenon under focus-in this case, the recent sub-Saharan African immigrant student. The primary focus of the basic qualitative investigator is to unravel and describe these meanings (Merriam and Tisdell).  The study will use non-probability purposeful sampling as recommended by Merriam and Tisdell (2016) for basic qualitative research and specific data is required from all the respondents. In between 10-12 participants will be interviewed because Merriam and Tisdell (2016) recommended that saturation level will likely be achieved around this range.  Merriam and Tisdell (2016) pointed out that interviewing is necessary when we cannot observe behavior, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them. Furthermore, they argued, good interview questions are those that are open-ended and yield descriptive data. This study seeks is to understand how teachers interpret the world. Interviewing is also the best technique to use when conducting intensive case studies of a few selected individuals such as in the present study (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).  The interviews for this study will be semi-structured. The interview guide includes a mix of more and less structured interview questions and all questions will be used flexibly (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). |
| **4.2 Population and Sample**  Describe the characteristics of the larger population from which the sample (study participants) will be drawn. Include sampling strategy such as purposeful. State the estimated sample size needed for the study. Justify the sample size with support from the literature. • Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. • Use APA style in citing all resources. | The target population is secondary school teachers in the coastal northeast region of the United States.  The sample is urban high school teachers who have successful experience teaching recent sub-Saharan African immigrants in public schools. The staff of the school of which participants were selected employs 120 teachers. The staff is diverse in age, gender and race.  During the research period, the staff will be invited to participate in a survey focused on how much experience they had teaching sub-Saharan immigrants. They will also be asked their level of comfort sharing their experiences. They will also be asked if they have been successful in engaging sub-Saharan youths.  The desired sample for this study is 10-12 experienced teachers of diverse backgrounds who were versed in the subject. The criteria developed for those teachers participating in this study will be adhered to.  First, teachers must currently work in an urban, high school setting. Second, teachers needed to be experienced in teaching recent African immigrants.  Additionally, those teachers would have had success in student engagement strategies. |
|  | Ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative research involves conducting the investigation in an ethical manner; and to a large extent to a large extent, the validity and reliability of a study depend upon the ethics of the investigator (Merriam and Tisdell,2016).  With the realization that researchers are guests in the private spaces of the world (Stake, 2005), there will be an adherence to good manners and a strict code of ethics. Therefore, the investigator will ensure that the respondents do not feel their privacy has been invaded or feel embarrassed by certain questions and they may tell things they had never intended to reveal (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).  Patton (2015) pointed out that the interviewer is neither a judge nor a therapist unresponsive to learning about great suffering and pain that may be reported and even re-experienced during an interview. Painful, debilitating memories may surface in an interview, even if the topic appears routine or benign. However, an interview may improve the condition of the respondents. Therefore, Patton (2015) recommended being able to make referrals to resources for assistance (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).  According to Creswell and Plano Clark (2011), researcher biasness remains a major ethical limitation of many studies. This was an issue in the research by Kumi-Yeboah and Smith (2017), where the two authors were more cognizant of their own backgrounds of Black immigrants. This reflected a conflict of interest because research participants included immigrant students from Sub-Saharan Africa. The first author Kumi-yeboah was a former K-12 teacher and African immigrant from the Caribbean. The authors acknowledged their shared cultural and educational experiences from the British educational system where they study. With the authors teaching in the US, they could easily access contacts, recruits and participants in their research, thus opening avenues for biasness. Creswell and Plano Clark mention that researcher biasness occurs when a researcher fails to differentiate own assumptions and study findings.  However, the solution involves contextualization of discussions within the questionnaires or interviews provided. Ethical implications arise when subjects emanate from similar backgrounds of the researchers, which has a negative influence on study findings and analysis. In such cases, researchers must consider using peer reviewers, reflective journals and books to limit individual social constructions, ethnic identities and their past educational experiences (Conrad, 2008). Other limitations included studies having limited qualitative and quantitative sample size, which they use to generalize cross-cultural educational occurrences, academic success and student engagements (Alrashidi, Phan & Ngu, 2016). The same small samples are used to generalize challenges and positive factors immigrant students face when they join universities at the host nation.  Before the interview, the researcher will consult with the IRB and his mentor for expert review helps determine the best wording for questions, eliminate unnecessary questions, and identify questions that might be stressful or inappropriate for the participant. Also, there will be an expert review of the data collection tool(s) for all greater-than-minimal risk studies.  A pilot study will not be conducted for this study. However, there will be a test run. Colleagues, friends and family members will be invited to assist with practicing implementing research activities. These individuals will not meet the inclusion criteria for the study and will merely "pretend" to be participants. The researcher will practice using digital recorders. The test run mock data will not be used in the dissertation.  Steps will be taken to protect the privacy of potential participants. They will be provided clear and accurate information about the study and will be allowed to consider whether they are interested in participating. No undue pressure or influence will be exerted on potential participants.  The researcher will ensure that participants voluntarily agree to take part in the study; participants are provided with clear and accurate information concerning the study and participants understand the information and have opportunities to ask questions.  Site permission will be obtained in conformity with the Capella IRB requirements. Steps will be taken to eliminate the potential conflict of interest. The interviews will be conducted over the phone due to social distancing measures currently in place. The research site will be a different school in the same school district as the researcher. Participants will be recruited by sending an email to staff members of the school. Furthermore, the researcher will disclose the potential conflict to participants through the informed consent process. An initial meeting recently took place with the Capella IRB representative.  Collected private information from human participants will be managed transported, stored, and destroyed appropriately and all identifiers, if collected, will protected.  Participants will be informed that no identifying information will be collected or that identifiers will be stored separate from other forms of collected data. |

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| Section 5. Research Data | |
| **5.1 Data Collection - Sampling Procedures**  Describe in detail each step that you will take from the beginning of recruitment to consent from the participants to participate. You must provide specific details and present the details in the order in which they will occur. You must include all of the following (if applicable):   * The recruitment site(s), acknowledgement of any permissions needed from the sites, and if there is an IRB at any of the sites. * All of the means by which recruitment will occur (i.e., flyers, e-mails, social media) * How potential participants will contact you. * How the potential participants will be screened and how you will proceed if they do qualify and if they do not qualify for the study.  • Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. • Use APA style in citing all resources. | 15821 frederick rd der  Merriam and Tisdell (2016) found that interviews are the most common mechanism to obtain data in most forms of qualitative research. The study spelt out that research interview is a conversation that has a structure and a purpose. It is an organized and orderly activity than can be learned and executed efficiently (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). Proper research involves learning and proper execution of interviews.  The site is an urban high school in the Northeast region. The research will begin after the written permission of the administrator has been obtained. The researcher will coordinate with the IRB for approval to conduct a study with teachers in this facility. The IRB will be provided all the information necessary to determine if the there is a conflict of interest or if there are ethical issues involved.  The interviews will be semi-structured interviews, but the beginning section is structured for gathering the same demographic data from everyone.  Purposeful sampling will be used. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), this type of sampling is when you select a sample based on time location and availability of the participants. The teachers selected are conveniently located in the same geographical area where the study will be conducted. The participants will be deliberately selected because of their experience and familiarity with the research question. They have successfully taught recent sub-Saharan immigrants for at least 3 years. The recruitment strategy involves emails sent to the staff.  Snowball sampling will be used. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), this strategy involves locating participants who meet the criteria that the researcher has established for participation in the study. After interviewing these early participants, they will provide referrals for other potential participants.  The interviews will be conducted over the phone.  Data and Privacy breaches of study participants is one of the largest risks to participants in this research.One could potentially use someone’s race, gender, years of experience, and rank to be able to identify a participant. For example, when the content of the data reveals details of an experience that someone could identify the respondent based on details shared within the data.Therefore, when I generate anonymous data such as participant's employment location, your length of service, your gender, any type of identifier that would ever allow you to be able to identify a participant will be removed. The data will not have identifying information on it and will be coded. I will have a master list for this code.  The master list will be kept in a file cabinet in my home office and and will be secured under lock and key. Only the researcher will have a copy of the key. The data will be destroyed after seven years. Papers will be shredded, and the recording devices will be destroyed by brute force – hammering. I will physically damage the the memory chip and the cassette by hammering will to make the data inaccessible. I will hammer and turn the chip into fine dust. The recording devices are:  1. Netac USB Flash Drive 32GB - USB 2.0 Interface Digital, Thumb Drive  2. DIGITNOW Portable Radio Cassette Player.  The researcher will conduct these phone interviews.  During the interview, each participant will be prompted to discuss their experience in teaching recent sub-Saharan immigrants. Though the academic engagement level can be subjective, the teachers will be asked to gauge the engagement level when using different instructional practices. |
| **5.2 Data Collection Procedures**  Describe where and how will you get the data and describe the exact procedure(s) that will be used to collect the data. This is a step-by-step description of exactly how the research will be conducted. This should read like a recipe for the data collection procedures to be followed in your study. Be sure to include all the necessary details so that someone else will be able to clearly understand how you will obtain your data. • Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. \*\*Use APA style in citing all resources | Recorded phone interviews will be used as the data collection method. Additionally, notes made from during the interviews will be used to collect data. The investigator may move onto behavioral coding only if it is determined that it will add more value to the study.  Merriam and Tisdell (2016) pointed out that in most forms of qualitative research, some and occasionally all of the data are collected through interviews. The researcher will use semi-structured interviews. According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), semi-structured interviews have no pre-determined wording or order and the largest part of the interview is guided by a list of questions or issues to be explored. The authors suggested some phrasing to elicit detailed and descriptive data. Examples are: Tell me about when… Give me an example of…tell me more about that…What was it for you like when…  Auerbach and Silverstein (2003) recommended six very general questions. These questions provide the participants with opportunities to bring up unanticipated topics that could be pursued. However, Merriam and Tisdell (2015) cautioned the researcher to discipline themselves not to pursue everything. |
| **5.3 Guiding Interview Questions**  Describe the interview method will you use and how you will conduct the interviews. List the guiding interview questions to be used in the qualitative interviews with the participants. Provide a rationale for how and why you are using the interview technique you will use to address the primary research question. Be sure to discuss the results of any field test that was conducted as a part of the process of developing the final version of the guiding interview questions. • Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. • Use APA style in citing all resources | According to Merriam and Tisdell (2016), asking good questions is key to getting meaningful data. The beginning of the interview will be structured for gathering the same demographic data from everyone.  **Part 1**   1. How long have you taught in this setting? 2. Have you noticed a surge in the sub- Saharan immigrant student population? 3. Do you agree with my definition of these learners as students from the black African countries (such as Nigeria, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, Congo, Ghana, Guinea, Gabon, Liberia, etc.) who have been in the country for less than a year and have been enrolled in the school system?   *Rationale for 1-3*  The beginning of a semi-structured interview could be structured. Here I am trying to get basic data from all respondents.   1. Please tell me, in detail, whatever you can about your experiences teaching recent sub-Saharan immigrant children.   *Rationale:*  Since the respondent has been carefully selected by the investigator on purpose, it can be assumed that the respondent has something to offer, has had an experience worth talking about. (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016)   1. Tell me if and how you have experienced any differences in the teaching and learning strategies for this population.   *Rationale:* This is a lead discussion question that will be followed by prompts depending on what the response is. Ndemanu & Jordan (2018) suggested that African immigrant children often encounter challenges with developing focused concentration when attending public schools.  **Part 2**   1. If you have experienced some specific features in getting these learners focus on tasks and participate clearly during, how have you handled them?   *Rationale:*  Brophy (1988) claimed that there is limited research on the relationships between specific instructional practices and student achievement.  An interviewer should assume neutrality with regard to the respondent’s knowledge (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016).   1. What has been your experience regarding how teachers feel when they try to get these   learners intellectually respond to appropriate instructional incentives or motivations?  *Rationale*   1. Some research has suggested that teachers of African recent sub-Saharan American immigrants have been successful with their engagement approach. But I notice that you did not describe that as part of your experience. I wonder if you would mind sharing your thoughts on this aspect.   *Rationale*  This is probe following an open-ended question to shed more light on the subject   1. Some people argue that recent sub-Saharan African immigrants respond differently to teaching strategies when engaging in the learning content. For instance, there is a belief that they should be provided with specific tools to learn.   *Rationale:*  This is another probe following an open-ended question to shed more light on the subject   1. Please describe what you perceive these engagement strategies with this population   *Rationale:*  Open-ended question aimed at gathering the experiences of the respondent |
| **5.4 Data Analyses**  Provide a step-by-step description of the procedures to be used to conduct the data analysis. Support this process by identification and reference to primary descriptive sources, such as Moustakas, Giorgi, Stake Yin, Charmaz, or Braun et al. Check that that the data analysis process is consistent with the accepted analytical steps for the specific qualitative methodology chosen to conduct this study. If you plan to use Qualitative data analysis software, list the software you will use and describe how it will be used. • Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. • Use APA style in citing all resources | The first step in conducting the qualitative analysis of the data will be to gather all the notes from the interview and capture them in a master spreadsheet. The analysis template will contain variables such as data source, code, question, and qualitative data type.  The next step in this process is about coding the observer’s notes Merriam and Tisdell (2015) as well as reading and deciding about how each one should be organized. Since this researcher is not looking for a pre-defined set or list of issues or themes, we will unpack the qualitative data to try and derive themes for the code list.  If anything falls outside of the coding list, it will be marked with an identifier such as “unclear” and come back to it later.  The research will manually transcribe the interviews. The coding will be done manually. As pointed out by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) the researcher and not software determines the codes. Applications that scan qualitative input and provide insights will not be used.  After all the data have been coded, the investigator will run the queries. This is the time to look for insights in the data. Running the queries will depend on which are the most used codes or themes. These will be presented visually to get a sense of the most important areas. Furthermore, it will be determined which issues are of most concern to different demographic segments. The investigator will be seeking to know if there any relationships between issues.  Once the queries are run and the data explored, the study may have a good foundation and enough insights to begin reporting.  Merriam and Tisdell (2015) outlined these steps as follows:   1. Category construction 2. Sorting out categories and data 3. Naming categories 4. Deciding how many categories 5. Becoming more theoretical.   (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015).  The final step is reporting on the findings. This consist in creating a narrative about the issues uncovered. There are guidelines provided by Merriam and Tisdell (2015) in reporting a qualitative study. |
| **5.5 Role of the Researcher**  Provide a description of the researcher’s pre-understandings, preconceptions and biases about the topic and about how the researcher will set them aside? • Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. • Use APA style in citing all resources. | Research by Roulston & Shelton (2015) indicates that bias is not a clearly defined concept and so recognizing and understanding research bias is crucial for determining the utility of study results. This researcher recognized that he may have preconceived notions about the phenomenon under investigation because of a similar personal experience. The researcher is a sub- Saharan African immigrant. He is also a teacher of this population in the same region where the study will take place. The only difference is that the researcher is not a recent immigrant. Nevertheless, due to his interactions with recent African immigrants, he may have some preconceived notions. For instance, the researcher is familiar with the stories of some of these African immigrant learners. He must, therefore, refrain from trying to ask questions that fit a preconceived narrative. The strategy involves thinking about his thinking.  According to Galdas (2017), bias is commonly understood to be any influence that provides a distortion in the results of a study ([Polit & Beck, 2014](https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1609406917748992)).  **To avoid bias, a researcher must be sophisticated enough to be able to think about their thinking. Investigators must indulge in critical** thinking. They must improve their quality of thinking by diligently gaining control of the patterns integral to thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them. (Paul and Elder, 2001). |
| **5.6 Credibility, Dependability and Transferability**  Present a strategy to ensure credibility, dependability, and transferability in the proposed study. Because the researcher is the primary instrument of research in qualitative studies, describe how you will establish credibility for the research. Describe the training and experience you have in regards to your methods for collecting and for analyzing your data. Credibility refers to confidence in the accuracy of the data as reported as well as a systematic and thorough interpretation by the researcher.  Credibility involves carrying out the study in a way that enhances the believability of the findings of the data over time and over conditions. Credibility is assessed by how well you demonstrate your understanding of your research methodology and how well you apply the methodology to data collection and data analysis. Credibility is assessed by how well you demonstrate your understanding of your research methodology and how well you apply the methodology to data collection and data analysis. Describe how you will demonstrate your expertise in regards to your research design. Transferability is demonstrated by showing that the sample fairly represents the target population, as well as by showing that the sample participants have the knowledge, experience, or expertise necessary to provide information that the discipline or field and the target population would find meaningful in regard to the topic. Dependability is demonstrated by providing clear, detailed, and sequential descriptions of all procedures and methods, such that another researcher could repeat each of them faithfully. • Use current (within 5-7 years), scholarly, PRIMARY resources to support statements. Use APA style in citing all resources | Trustworthiness refers to the credibility of the researcher’s findings (Glense, 2006). By the very nature of qualitative research, it is challenging for the researcher to completely detach the work from personal beliefs and experiences. Here social desirability bias may become an issue when research involves collecting data on personal issues. In the current study, for example, the respondents may believe that the interviewer (a colleague with the same experience) expects them to respond in a specific way in order to reinforce a preconceived notion.  Measures will be taken, including the Subjectivity Statement, so that research trustworthiness will be obtained.  To ensure the validity of the research, multiple forms of data will be collected using teacher interviews to obtain the richness of their experiences and classroom observations. Second member checks were conducted after each interview. Regarding the dependability of the research, a peer debriefing will be done to develop a consensus of the transcription and analysis.  Subjectivity Statement  As an educator of nearly over decades, I share the same experience as the participants. I have extensive experience teaching sub-Saharan African immigrants. Furthermore, I am an immigrant myself from sub-Saharan Africa. |

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| Section 6. References |
| In the field below, provide your references for the research about your topic, and key theorists/researchers associated with the selected methodology. You will continue to build on this list of references for your Chapter 1 Background of the Problem, Chapter 2 Literature Review and Chapter 5, where you will discuss your findings in the context of the literature.\*Use APA style for all references. |
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**For Residency Learners:**

Submit completed form to your Residency Faculty for review.

**For Dissertation Learners:**

**Mentor:** This form must be approved by all Dissertation committee members prior to submission for SMR Committee review. Please send completed and approved Dissertation Research Plan to [Dissertation@capella.edu](mailto:compdisssupport@capella.edu) for SMR Committee review.

**Dissertation Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Dissertation Committee Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Dissertation Committee Member Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**APPENDIX (as needed)**

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| Scientific Merit Evaluation |
| The Residency Faculty/SMR Reviewer determines if the research plan is approved, deferred for minor or major revisions, or disapproved based on the SMR Rubric.Minor revisions are things like needing to include more detail or issues related to APA style.Major revisions are issues where there are major design flaws, potential ethical concerns or a clear inconsistency in terms of the research questions, the design and the proposed data analysis.Disapproval occurs if the researcher fails to pass the scientific merit review on the third attempt or it could occur earlier in the process if it is clear that the study does not have any potential for scientific merit or the study has major ethical or methodological flaws that can’t be corrected.If a researcher does not pass the scientific merit review on the 3rd attempt, then the case will be referred to the School’s Research Lead/Chair or Program Chair for review, evaluation and intervention. Interventions might include the requirement that the learner take a writing course, take an additional research course, attend the dissertation writer’s retreat or attend a Track 4 Residency event. The purpose of any intervention would be to help the researcher develop research or writing skills that could help them succeed.ATTENTION DISSERTATION MENTORS AND RESEARCHERSIf the Dissertation Research Plan has been deferred:The SMR reviewer will provide feedback on any criteria that you have not met.The mentor is required to meet with the SMR Research Help Desk to discuss the deferral and develop a plan for guiding the revisions.You are required to make the necessary revisions and obtain approval for the revisions from your Mentor. Make the corrections on the original document (the one that was returned from the reviewer with their comments present - DO NOT DELETE the comments). Also, please highlight any changes made in the original document using a different color if necessary.  If these two key pieces are missing from the updated research plan, it will be returned to the mentor.Once you have Mentor approval for your revisions, your Mentor will submit your Dissertation Research Plan for a second review. You will be notified if your Dissertation Research Plan has been approved, deferred for major or minor revisions, or disapproved.Up to three attempts to obtain Scientific Merit Review (SMR) approval are allowed. Researchers, Mentors, and reviewers should make every possible attempt to resolve issues before the Dissertation Research Plan is failed for the third time. If a researcher does not pass the scientific merit review on the third attempt, then the case will be referred to the Research Chair and/or Program Chair in your School for review, evaluation, and intervention. |
| **First SMR Review** |
| Approved  Disapproved  Deferred for Minor Revisions  Deferred for Major Revisions  Conference call needed with mentor and researcher  Reviewer Name:  Reviewer signature:  Date: |
| **Second SMR review** |
| Approved  Disapproved  Deferred for Minor Revisions  Deferred for Major Revisions  Conference call needed with mentor and researcher  Reviewer Name:  Reviewer signature:  Date: |
| **Third SMR review** |
| Approved  Referred to Research Lead, Research Chair and/or Program Chair for intervention. Interventions might include the recommendation or the requirement that the learner take a writing course, an additional research course, attend the dissertation writer’s retreat or attend a Track 4 Residency event. The purpose of any intervention would be to help the researcher develop research or writing skills that could help them succeed.  Reviewer Name:  Reviewer Signature:  Date: |
| **Final Scientific Merit Status** |
| Approved  Disapproved  Reviewer Signature:  Date:  \*This has been a scientific merit review of the research plan. Obtaining this approval does not guarantee that you will obtain IRB approval.  \*If a researcher does not pass the scientific merit review on the 3rd attempt, then the case will be referred to the Research Lead, the Research Chair and/or the Program Chair for review, evaluation and intervention. Researchers, mentors and reviewers should make every attempt possible to resolve issues before the SMR is failed on a 3rd attempt. |