

Executive Summary

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ADS 840: Doctoral Seminar

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e-Portfolio (Prezi) <https://prezi.com/p/edit/kskomp7mydki/>

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Executive Summary

Introduction

My journey to the PhD is based on personal, professional, and ethical reasons. I want to grow as an educator, leader, and researcher. I also want to make a positive impact on students, schools, and the wider community.

I am pursuing a PhD for several reasons. This goal started when I was a child. My mother always encouraged me to achieve a high level of education. She guided me and supported me during my school years. She discussed my marks and report cards with me. This continued during my undergraduate studies and even during my first master's degree; she kept encouraging me. Especially since education is very important in Lebanese culture. Even though public schools in Lebanon are limited, many families borrow money to send their children to private schools. Lebanon is also known for the quality of its education. It was ranked 4th in the world for math and science education, and 10th overall for quality of education by the World Economic Forum. In addition, the literacy rate in Lebanon is 95.07%, according to the World Bank (2018) and the International Trade Administration (2022). Also, many companies support education. They provide financial aid for employees' children. When I completed my MBA in Finance, I received a 10% salary increase from my employer, First National Bank. I was also influenced by an important idea from Warren Buffett. He said that the best way to prepare for the economic future is to invest in your own education (TOI Lifestyle Desk, 2025). This idea stayed with me. It made me believe that continuous learning is the best investment a person can make.

Another reason I am pursuing a PhD is my personal desire to improve. I always want to do things in the best way. I like to develop my skills and improve my work. During my time at First National Bank, I worked as a Product Development Officer in the Marketing Department.

Then I was promoted to Head of the Business Analysis Unit. Later, I became Acting Head of Business Development in the Branches Management Department. These roles helped me grow professionally, but I wanted to learn more and improve further. This is why I continued my education. My ethical values also played an important role in my decisions. I care about protecting vulnerable people. I want to support those who do not have a strong voice. At first, I studied finance because I wanted to help solve the economic problems in Lebanon. However, I left the banking sector because of government corruption. After that, I decided to pursue a career in education. Later on, I completed a second master's degree in Education to become a certified teacher in Canada. This was important to meet professional standards, even though I was already teaching at Crescent School without certification. Today, I am pursuing a PhD to support students. Many students are vulnerable. They need motivation, feedback, and emotional support to succeed. Without this support, some students may fail or drop out. This can negatively affect both the individual and society. I want to help students succeed, continue their education, and contribute positively to the economy and community.

I am very proud to be a teacher. I also worked as an educational leader for five years. However, I still want to improve my leadership skills. I want to learn better strategies and practices. My goal is to impact more students in my school. I also want to reach students beyond my school. I believe I can do this through research. By publishing my work in journals and presenting at conferences, I can share my ideas with educators worldwide. I am also interested in teaching at the university level. My background and experiences have influenced my academic work during my PhD coursework. They have also shaped my dissertation topic. My dissertation is titled: "Exploring Teachers' Perceptions of Formative Assessment, Feedback, and Leadership Practices to Enhance Student Learning and Engagement in Ontario Schools." In this study, I will

focus on high school teachers in both public and independent schools. I want to understand how teachers support student achievement. I will explore how Ontario teachers today use formative assessment to improve learning. I will also examine how often teachers provide feedback and how this feedback helps students build knowledge. In addition, I will study how teachers use technology in their classrooms. Technology can help teachers give faster feedback. It can also help them check student understanding right after an assessment. This allows teachers to adjust their lesson plans quickly. I also plan to explore the use of gamification to increase student motivation and engagement. Finally, I want to understand the role of school principals. I will examine how they implement their school vision. This includes goals such as academic excellence and inclusive learning. I believe leadership plays an important role in supporting teachers and improving student outcomes.

Example 1: Quantitative Research Method

I am proud of my work in ADS 820A: Advanced Quantitative Research. The course helped me to improve my skills in creating hypotheses, designing surveys, and analyzing data using SPSS, including ANOVA and regression. The main project was conducting quantitative research, which gave me hands-on practice and prepared me to conduct quantitative research with confidence.

For my main project, I studied the relationship between e-textbook use and computer self-efficacy among higher-education students at CDI College in Mississauga. I wanted to explore whether there is a relationship between the use of e-textbooks and students' confidence in using computers, especially given the increasing importance of technology in modern education. I adopted and adjusted an existing survey that was used for the same topic in a different geographical zone, and created a consent letter for participants. The survey measured

participants' demographics, e-textbook use, computer confidence, and GPA. Survey questions include Likert scales and yes/no questions. I used purposive sampling and targeted 47 business students, and thirty students participated. Data was collected online over one week. Three hypotheses guided the study: differences in e-textbook use by field of study, differences in computer self-efficacy by age, and the relationship between computer self-efficacy and GPA. ANOVA results showed that most students had positive experiences with e-textbooks and high computer confidence. No significant differences were found by field, age, or GPA. This means computer skills were generally high. The study showed that students, including international students in Canada, are confident using technology. E-textbooks may not strongly increase confidence, but they support learning. Limitations included a small sample size and self-reported data. Future research should include larger samples, longitudinal designs, and qualitative methods like interviews.

Moreover, through submitting many graded exercises in the course, I learned how to interpret descriptive statistics, confidence intervals, correlations, t-tests, ANOVA, regression, and Chi-square tests. For example, I learned that standard error shows variation in sample means, and 95% confidence intervals show where the true mean likely lies. I practiced analyzing relationships between variables, including weak, moderate, and strong correlations, and checking significance using p-values. I also learned how to compare groups using t-tests and ANOVA. Regression exercises taught me how predictors influence outcomes, like age and experience affecting salary, or tea consumption affecting cognitive scores. Chi-square exercises helped me see how categorical variables relate, like time pressure and work detachment.

Example 2: Qualitative Research Method

Once I took ADS 830: Advanced Qualitative Research course, I decided that I will do qualitative research in my dissertation. This course changed my thinking. It helped me understand how to prepare a full research paper that can be published in an academic journal. One important thing I learned is how to organize a research paper in a clear structure. In my paper, Utilizing Assessments to Improve Knowledge Construction, Motivation, Discipline, and Learning Performance of High School Students, I applied this structure clearly.

I learned that a strong paper starts with an introduction. In my study, I explained the problem of student motivation and engagement. I showed why this topic is important, especially for students who depend on extrinsic motivation and may struggle in school. Then, I learned how to write a literature review. This part is very important. I discussed theories like constructivism and motivation. For example, I explained that students build knowledge by connecting new information to what they already know. I also showed that both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation affect learning. I identified a gap by showing that there is limited research on how teachers use formative assessments in real classrooms. I also learned how to write the methods section. This part was challenging, but very useful. In my paper, I used a qualitative phenomenological design. I selected seven high school teachers from two schools in Toronto. I conducted interviews on Zoom and used inductive coding to analyze the data. I learned how to design interview questions and apply coding to develop themes. Another important part is the data section. I learned how to clearly describe the data. In my study, the data came from interview transcripts. This makes the research clear and transparent. In the results section, I learned how to present findings. I identified themes such as the importance of positive teacher–student relationships. Teachers explained that when students feel supported, they participate more. I also found that graded

classwork increases effort, and bonus questions increase participation. I supported these findings with quotes from teachers. The discussion section helped me explain the meaning of my results. I connected my findings to theory. For example, my results support constructivism because students learn better when they are actively engaged. I also connected my findings to motivation theory, especially the role of extrinsic rewards like grades. I also learned to write about limitations. In my study, I explained that the sample was small and limited to two schools. I also mentioned that I did not include students or classroom observations. I learned how to write a clear conclusion. I summarized that teacher practices, such as relationships and assessments, have a strong impact on student success and university acceptance.

This assignment is the one I am most proud of. It challenged me, especially in coding and analysis, but it helped me grow as a researcher. I now feel confident to write a full qualitative research paper that can be published and to use this approach in my PhD dissertation.

Example 3: Leading Change Framework

In ADS 710: Organizational Theory, Development, and Strategic Change, I learned a new leadership framework that strongly influenced my thinking. For me, this course is one of the most valuable things I learned in my PhD. The leading framework is the change model from John P. Kotter's Leading Change. This model is very important for me because I will use it in my dissertation and also adopt it in my future work as a school leader.

The framework helped me to understand that successful change does not happen by chance. It follows clear steps. Kotter's model includes creating urgency, building a guiding coalition, developing a vision, communicating the vision, empowering people, creating short-term wins, and anchoring change in culture. This framework gave me a structured way to understand how leadership works in real organizations.

Another important thing I learned is that leadership is different from management. Leadership focuses on vision, direction, and motivation. This idea changed my thinking. I now see that schools need strong leadership to improve and adapt to change. I will use this framework in my dissertation because it helps explain how leaders influence motivation and change in schools. It also connects to my research interest about how leadership impacts students and teachers. This model will support my analysis and help me interpret my findings. I will also adopt this framework in my future work as a school leader. For example, I will create a clear vision for the school and make sure all teachers understand it. I will also support teachers by giving them training and resources, especially in using technology in the classroom. I will create short-term goals to keep teachers motivated and show progress.

Example 4: Investor Risk Assessment

Another important thing I learned in my PhD that really stood out was from ADS 770: Economic and Financial Policy Leadership in Global Society. This course changed my thinking in a clear way. This course helped me think beyond educational leadership and understand global economics. This course allowed me to refresh and update my knowledge in economics and investment.

I acted like a consultant in the investor risk assessment report. I studied a cobalt mining investment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I analyzed political instability, corruption, weak rule of law, and rebel group risks, such as M23. I also studied currency problems such as inflation and depreciation of the Congolese franc. I evaluated trade agreements like AfCFTA and the US-DRC Bilateral Investment Treaty. I also discussed community issues and the importance of social license to operate. This assignment helped me connect theory to real life. It also helped me apply my economic knowledge in a new way.

This assignment also provides clear evidence for the seven PhD standards. First, I showed a visionary mindset by recommending investment with conditions, such as focusing on the southern Copperbelt and long-term planning. Second, I addressed equity and inclusion by explaining the importance of community development and gaining trust from local people. Third, I managed complex information by analyzing political, economic, legal, and social factors in one report. Fourth, I used data and evidence, including investment data, inflation rates, and global cobalt demand, to support my decision. Fifth, I showed ethical thinking by discussing corruption, fairness, and responsible mining practices. Sixth, I analyzed the larger context by studying global demand for cobalt, international trade agreements, social requirements, and geopolitical risks. Seventh, I used technology and research tools to collect data, create tables like the risk summary table, and present my findings in a professional report.

One idea that really stayed with me is risk assessment. I learned how to study both risks and opportunities before making a decision. I also learned about “social license to operate.” This means companies must gain trust from local communities. Without this trust, projects can fail. This course also helped me think in a global way. I now understand how global issues affect local decisions. One challenge for me was working with a lot of information. It was not easy to combine political, economic, and social factors into one clear recommendation. But this challenge helped me improve my thinking and writing.

Example 5: Sam Tibi Personal Case Study & Organizational Code of Ethics

Another important thing I learned in my PhD was from ADS 760: Ethical Practices in Leadership and Policy. This course changed my thinking and helped me to focus more on ethics and values, and I was encouraged to be a whistleblower whenever needed impacted by the

Medaille University case study. I learned about the moral theories, and individuals and organizations must have ethical codes of conduct.

I was proud to write about myself in the personal case study assignment. I discussed real ethical examples from my career. At the Mövenpick hotel in Beirut, workers had too much work and no extra pay. I had to approve rooms even when the cleaning was not perfect. This was not fair to workers or guests. I tried to support the workers and listen to their concerns about the workload. This was evidence of my efforts to improve the situation and establish a caring, fair work environment. It connects to the PhD standard of supporting a culture of equity. At First National Bank, I saw serious risks. The bank was lending a lot of money to the government. I warned my executives about possible problems of the Lebanese government's ability to repay its obligations in US currency, but they did not listen. In 2019, the financial crisis in Lebanon proved me right.

Another idea that stayed with me is ethical decision-making. I learned that leaders must do the best for all stakeholders. In the Mövenpick hotel in Beirut, I had to think about workers, guests, and management. In the bank, I had to think about clients and the economy. I also learned that leaders must match their actions and decision-making with their organization's vision, mission, code of conduct, and values. This is called "walk the talk." This connects to the PhD standard of integrity and fairness. I provided an integrity example when I raised concerns at both organizations, the Mövenpick hotel in Beirut and the First National Bank, and chose to leave when I felt it was not ethical to stay.

I also learned about organizational ethics. I learned that a clear code of ethics guides staff. In the Organization Code of Ethics Assignment, I studied the vision and mission statements and the code of ethics for two educational institutions, Danville Community College and Lewis

and Clark College. I saw that fairness, respect, trust, and integrity are very important. Codes should also address new issues like technology, data privacy, and mental health.

What Nest

At this stage in my PhD journey, I believe that the coursework at Niagara University has prepared me well for the dissertation phase. Each course helped me build important knowledge and skills. These courses also shaped how I think about research and practice in education.

To evaluate the role of school principals in improving student achievement, I will use the John Kotter framework presented in his book *Leading Change*. I studied this framework in ADS 710: *Organizational Theory, Development, and Strategic Change*. This framework will help me understand how school leaders create change and improve school performance. And when exploring the extent to which school principals are making the teachers accountable for student achievement, I will use Greg Bustin's framework presented in his book, *Accountability: The Key to Driving a High-Performance Culture*. I learned about this in ADS 730: *Organizational Assessment and Accountability*. This framework will help me study how principals hold teachers responsible for student outcomes and how this affects performance.

In addition, my Master of Education studies at Niagara University provided me with strong theoretical foundations. I will use concepts such as constructivism, formative assessment, and student motivation in my research. These were covered in courses such as EDU 530: *Managing the Culturally Responsive Classroom*, EDU 536: *Human Learning, Development and Motivation*, EDU 523: *Foundations in Education*, EDU 505: *Educational Tests and Measurement*, and EDU 790: *Professional Seminar in Education*.

To conduct my research in a proper scholarly manner, I will draw on the knowledge and skills I gained from several courses. These include ADS 805: *Research and Statistics*, ADS 810:

Research Seminar, ADS 830: Advanced Qualitative Research, and ADS 840: Doctoral Seminar. These courses helped me understand research design, data collection, data analysis, and academic writing. They also improved my ability to think critically and write clearly. In addition, I will implement what I learned from key research books such as *The Dissertation Journey* by Laura Hyatt, *How to Design, Write, and Present a Successful Dissertation Proposal* by Elizabeth Wentz, *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* by Johnny Saldaña, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* by John W. Creswell and J. David Creswell, and the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. These resources will guide me in writing, designing, analyzing, and formatting my research in a clear, structured manner.

During this coming summer, I will also take additional courses to further prepare for my dissertation. These courses include ADS 807: Geographical Information Systems and Research and ADS 750: Diversity in Organizations. I believe these courses will add more depth to my knowledge. They will help me better understand data, context, and diversity in educational settings. This will support me before I hopefully start my dissertation in the coming Fall.

Furthermore, I learned in ADS 720: Process, Politics, and Evaluation of Public and Social Policy that research should inform practice and policy. As a result, one possible outcome of my study, or a further step, is to develop a policy proposal for the Ministry of Education in Ontario or school boards such as the Toronto District School Board. This will allow my research to have a practical impact on educational improvement.

PhD Program Standards and Evidence

1. Program completers promote a visionary mindset, and continuously develop, advocate for, and enact a mission and core values that are shared and supported by organizational stakeholders.
2. Program completers advocate for, nurture, and sustain a creative and caring culture consistent with the mission of the organization and embracing of equity, diversity, and inclusion.
3. Program completers cooperatively, comprehensively, and effectively manage the people, resources, and ideas of their organizational context, while embracing flexibility and adaptability.
4. Program completers assess organizational quality and make decisions to positively impact the organization, informed by sound data analysis and evidence, following accepted research methods and practices.
5. Program completers model integrity, fairness, equity, and ethical purpose while also personifying optimism, perseverance, self-efficacy, and composure.
6. Program completers appreciate, respond to, and influence the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural contexts through their research, analysis, and evaluation of procedures and policies and empower others to join in the process with them.
7. Program completers use current technologies to improve and enrich their practice and the work of the organization.

Table 1*Alignment of program courses with doctoral leadership standards*

Courses	Seven Standards			
ADS 710 Organizational Theory, Development & Strategic Change	1	2	3	
1- Leading Change (Kotter) book review and chapter 9 presentation	1	2	3	
2- Great by Choice (Collins & Hansen) book review and chapter 2 presentation	1	2	3	
3- Developing and Implementing a Strategic Plan: Final Paper and Presentation	1	2	3	
ADS 720 Process, Politics and Evaluation of Public and Social Policy		2	4	6
1- Canada's Policy Options Response to the 2025 U.S. Tariffs: Through the Lens of Rational Choice Theory and Historical Institutionalism Theory		2	4	6
2- Policy Brief One: Fighting Cyber Crime and Ransomware (Groupwork)		2	4	6
3- Policy Brief Two: Curbing Wildfires (Groupwork)		2	4	6
4- Policy Brief Three: Using Foreign Policy to Improve Global Gender Equality (Groupwork)		2	4	6
ADS 730 Organizational Assessment and Accountability	1		3	6
1- Accountability: The key to driving a high-performance culture. (Greg Bustin) book review and chapter 5 presentation	1		3	6
2- Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us. (Daniel Pink) book review and presentation (Groupwork)	1		3	6
3- Final Summary/Reflection/Application Paper for Organizational Accountability, Staff Accountability, Personal Accountability and Book Presentations Takeaways (Drive – Daniel H. Pink (2011), Dare to Lead – Brené Brown (2018), Think Again – Adam Grant (2021), Mindset – Carol S. Dweck (2016))	1		3	6
ADS 740 Leadership in a Global Society	1	2		6 7
1- The Culture Map (Erin Meyer) Book Review	1	2		6 7
2- Revised Book Chapter (The Global Leadership of Dr. Denis Mukwege Through Vincentian Virtues) and Presentation	1	2		6 7
ADS 750 Diversity in Organizations (Summer 2026)		2		
ADS 760 Ethical Practices in Leadership and Policy	1	2		5 6
1- Sam Tibi Case Study	1	2		5 6

2- Personal Code of Ethics	1	2		5	6		
3- Organization Code of Ethics	1	2		5	6		
4- Final Essay: Corporate Social Responsibility	1	2		5	6		
ADS 770 Economic and Financial Policy Leadership in a Global Society	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1- Investor Risk Assessment Cobalt Mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2- Policy Hack-A-Thon (Group Presentation)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3- Gold and Silver Tracking Reports (Groupwork)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
ADS 805 Research and Statistics		2		4	5	6	7
1- Critique of Qualitative Journal Article: Understanding the dynamics of study motivation: An in-depth analysis of teachers' perceptions in primary schools		2		4	5	6	7
2- Critique of Quantitative Journal Article: Motivation and Self-Regulation of Learning in Homeschooled Students		2		4	5	6	7
3- Education Fraud in the U.S Presentation		2		4	5	6	7
ADS 807 Geographical Information Systems and Research (Summer 2026)				4	5	6	
ADS 810 Research Seminar				4	5		7
1- Doctoral Dissertation Analysis 1: Dr. Staci Luann Cade				4	5		
2- Doctoral Dissertation Analysis 2: Dr. Sheila Youngblood				4	5		
3- Doctoral Dissertation Analysis 3: Dr. David Clovis				4	5		
4- Doctoral Dissertation Analysis 4: Dr. Sarah Hardy				4	5		
5- Executive Summary				4	5		
6- Personal Reflection of Invited Speaker: Dr. Jennifer Kay Young Wallace				4	5		
7- Personal Reflection of Invited Speaker: Dr. JoAnna Roberto				4	5		
8- Personal Reflection of Invited Speaker: Dr. Rachael Rossi				4	5		
9- Personal Reflection of Invited Speaker: Dr. Ola Adelakun				4	5		
10- Personal Reflection of Invited Speaker: Dr. Caitlin Riegel				4	5		
11- Personal PhD Program ePortfolio				4	5		7
12- Creswell Chapters 3-4 (Group Presentation)				4	5		
ADS 820 Advanced Quantitative Research			3	4	5		7
1- A Study of Electronic Textbook Use and Computer Self-Efficacy of International Students at CDI College, Mississauga, Canada			3	4	5		7

2- The Relationship Between E-Textbook Use and Computer Self-Efficacy Among Higher Education Students at CDI College, Mississauga Campus (Presentation)	3	4	5	7			
3- Developing Your Research Question, O'Leary, 2021 – (Chapter 3)		4					
ADS 830 Advanced Qualitative Methods		4	5	6	7		
1- Publishable Journal Article: Utilizing Assessments to Improve Knowledge Construction, Motivation, Discipline, and Learning Performance of High School Students		4	5	6	7		
2- Critique of Journal Article: Understanding the Dynamics of Study Motivation - An In-Depth Analysis of Teachers' Perceptions in Primary Schools		4	5	6	7		
ADS 840 Doctoral Seminar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1- Dissertation Chapters 1 and 3: Exploring Teachers' Perceptions of Formative Assessment, Feedback, and Leadership Practices to Enhance Student Learning and Engagement in Ontario Schools	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2- Personal PhD Executive Summary					5		
3- e-Portfolio					5		7
4- Dissertation Topic Reference Matrix as Chapter 2 Draft			3	4	5		7
5- Mock Dissertation Proposal Defence	1				5		

Reference

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