Advancing Practice Through the DNP Capstone

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THANK YOU TO AACN!!!

For your continued leadership and commitment to move forward the transition to the DNP as the entry into Advanced Practice
What if......?

We had 1000s of DNP capstones accessible at a moment’s notice to:

✓ Improve health care

AND

✓ Showcase how nurses do and can contribute to comprehensive, quality health care?
Potential of the DNP Capstone to accomplish MULTIPLE goals

Priorities:

• Build student expertise in practice inquiry
• Contribution to advancing/improving care particularly to our local communities, health care agencies* and institutions
  – Can directly affect care delivered
  – Can assist agencies to innovate better models of care delivery thus improving outcomes of care
• Contribution to ADVANCING RN & APRN practice
• Contribution to the nursing profession & nursing science
• Contributions to practice inquiry, translational science and comparative effectiveness research

* The term “Agency” is used to mean ALL possible healthcare or health promotion settings, e.g. primary, secondary, tertiary, community
“Practice Inquiry is an ongoing, systematic investigation of questions about nursing therapeutics and clinical phenomena with the intent to appraise and translate all forms of ‘best evidence’ to practice, and to evaluate the translational impact on the quality of health care and health outcomes.”

(Magyary, Whitney & Brown, 2006, p. 143)
What is Language and focus most appropriate for the DNP?

What is the difference between the terms?

• Practice Scholarship vs. Clinical Scholarship

• Practice inquiry vs. Translational research
Translational research vs. Practice Inquiry

• **Translational research**
  - Comparative effectiveness research
    - PhD Research Scientist’s focus*
    - Knowledge generation, scientific discovery

• **Practice Inquiry**
  - DNP practitioner focus
  - Translational science
  - Program evaluation
  - Practice change (improvement) programs
  - Quality improvement
  - Translating evidence to clinical practice

*Include DNP APRN collaboration in the process*
TRANSLATING EVIDENCE TO CLINICAL PRACTICE
Interactive Phases

- Appraisal
- Sustainability
- Modification
- Impact
- Dissemination
- Implementation/Adoption

Ongoing Evaluation & Refinement

NIH, 9/07 & Magyary 9/08
"Blue Highways" on the NIH Roadmap


*added by Nancy Woods
ADVANCING THE SCIENCE OF NURSING PRACTICE

Collaborative Enterprise

Collegial Exchange
DNP and PhD

(Magyary, 2008)
#1 DNP capstones/projects have the potential to advance practice at the local, state and national levels
   – Address key issues, barriers and facilitators related to this goal

#2 School of Nursing faculty and curricula are KEY determinants of the extent to which DNP capstones will actually advance practice
   – Information from my January 2011 ‘review’ of the websites of 130 schools with DNP programs
   – Call for a ‘refinement’ of our shared vision of the DNP capstone is timely
DNP capstones/projects have the potential to advance practice at the local, state and national levels

• Why now?
• Generation of capstone evidence
• Accumulation of capstone evidence
• Dissemination of capstone evidence
Why now?

• Funding from healthcare reform legislation
• Increased emphasis on comparative effectiveness and translation research at NIH
• IOM reports
  – e.g. The Future of Nursing
• Support for nurse practitioner practice in primary care settings, integration within AHRQ primary care network (PBRNs), Patient Centered Medical Homes
• Support for community-based efforts through CDC
• High health care costs
• Financial constraints
  – ? Agency funds for practice improvement projects
An idea whose time has come

OPPORTUNITIES:

• Rethink patient care 1\textsuperscript{st} ? then nurses
  • Simultaneous advancement through partnering
  • Exemplars: Mary Nailor
• Maximize doctorally prepared APRNs contribution to improving the nation’s health
• The DNP capstone can make a powerful contribution to:
  • Advancing APRN practice, RN practice, interprofessional practice and all collaborative practice
  • Can contribute to advancing opportunities for DNP preparation
BARRIERS to simultaneous advancement through partnering

• Call for evidence comparing master’s and DNP outcomes

• **Values:** To what extent does academic nursing faculty/administration value science about:
  – nursing practice, clinical practice
  – professional practice issues
  – nursing care delivery
  – practice change implementation

• **Stigma:** To what extent does stigma of faculty scholarship to study nurses, nursing practice, outcomes of nursing care?

• **Joint curriculum** for PhD and DNP students in Practice Inquiry to enhance collaborative work in translation research, program evaluation AND the science of practice change

• **Faculty expertise:** To what extent have academic institutions invested in faculty development in Practice Inquiry?
Generation of capstone evidence

• Have we seen/experienced how DNP capstones can advance practice?
  – Testimonials about a student project that made a difference

• Are the programs, approaches, proposals that DNP students create actually implemented in a practice agency?
  – Currently it *appears* many if not most are not
    • (at least as part of the capstone)

• Implementation usually requires:
  – multiple students or series of students over time
Collaboration with agencies

• Soliciting projects that the agency is invested in doing
  – Agency can easily see benefits to them for participation

• Offering ‘appropriate’ options for practice improvement or innovative programs to the agency
  – Agency approval; possible system demands
  – Some similarities to model of finding data collection sites for research projects
    • Perception of agency benefits may be clearer than research
Exemplar project solicitation

• Meetings with nurse executives at community agencies to orient to DNP program and capstone
• Generation of possible ideas from nurse executives, managers and/or QI staff
• Generation of possible ideas from APRNs in agency
  – Recent example: Development of a program delivered by APRNs to enhance quality of care for IBS patients in GI clinic
What about post masters students who want to do a practice change at their agency?

• Can be powerful in the right student at the right time.

• Increases the likelihood that the practice inquiry project will actually be implemented to improve practice.

• Complexities of multiple roles of employee and student.
Creating evidence for advancing practice

- Promote DNP & PhD collaboration
- Refine the differentiation between a dissertation and Practice inquiry capstone
  - Emphasize the agency and practice improvement priority
  - student preconceptions or assumptions
- Avoid glass ceilings while focusing students on DOABLE projects that are not traditional dissertations
- Understanding differential needs of post BSN and Post Master’s
Accumulation of capstone evidence

Exemplars for compiling DNP capstones

**ResearchWorks**

- Internal to UW—Organized through UW libraries
- An indexed archive of pdf files
  - Can be set up to be open to all (www); open all UW; or with log in solely for SoN.
  - Agency to have project linked?
- Set up for research projects
  - Could explore changing the terms e.g. ‘scholarly work’
- Is evidence of IRB approval required?
- Students access to ResearchWorks throughout
SharePoint

- Microsoft product
- Current technology personnel easily able to set it up and train faculty in use.
- Capable of creating a library of completed capstone projects that can be easily searched using key terms.
- Could list completed capstone projects by agency
  - and within each agency group projects with a similar focus.
- Can control who has access
- Could articulate with SoN use of SharePoint for other DNP capstone activity
  - matching students with available projects
Accumulation of capstone evidence

- Schools of Nursing publishing students’ abstracts on their websites
- NONPF accumulating a list of names of capstone projects
- Doctors of nursing practice organization
  - Invitation for DNP students, graduates to post capstone project abstracts
    - [www.doctorsofnursingpractice.org/studentprojects.php](http://www.doctorsofnursingpractice.org/studentprojects.php)
- Other
Dissemination of capstone evidence

• Are we going to focus dissemination on the traditional approach of refereed publications?
• At the time of the capstone completion to whom will we disseminate?
  – SoN or UW only? Agency? WWW?
• What if uncover serious patient care problems?
• Agency privacy concerns
  – Is it OK for agency to be named?
    • Would private hospital in Pacific NW be acceptable? Or just hospital, primary care clinic, etc.?
#2 School of Nursing faculty and curricula are KEY determinants of the extent to which DNP capstones will actually advance practice

• Information from my January 2011 ‘review’ of the websites of 130 Schools with DNP programs
  – Focused primarily on DNP capstone

• AACN website lists 130 schools with active DNP programs
  – Thanks to AACN for keeping this list of DNP Programs!
Our collective views

• Wide variability in school websites
  – About 10% had no information
  – About half of us described or defined DNP capstone
• If no capstone specified
  – Sometimes immersion/practicum instead
• Analysis of curriculum grids
  • Usually (not always) DNP capstone specified
• 8 schools use quarter system
  – Total credits for post master’s DNP= 29-75 credits
  – Total credits for post BSN DNP= 90-130 credits (n=3)
• 122 schools use semester system
  – Total credits for post master’s DNP= 27-36 credits
  – Total credits for post BSN DNP= 63-93 credits (n=57)
Program characteristics

• Length of programs  = 1-5 years
• Have only post master’s programs  \( n=70 \)
• Have nursing leadership, executive, administration focus + advanced practice  \( n=40\) out of 128
• Have educator focus + other specialties \( n=12 \)
• Use term residency \( n=58 \)
  – Most connect residency with DNP capstone
• Connect practicum course with DNP capstone \( n=59 \)
Program characteristics

• No ‘clinical’ coursework named n=10
• No research related courses in DNP n=10
  – May be pre-requisite or content taught within DNP capstone courses
• Capstone course credits
  – 7-19 quarter credits (mode=12); spread 2-4 quarters
  – 3-13 semester credits; spread 1-5 semesters
• What exactly IS the DNP Capstone?
  – Visualizing the ‘forms’
Form vs. essence: DNP capstones

- **ESSENCE**
  - core, spirit, heart

- **FORM**
  - Shape, outward appearance, structure

- Almost all schools provide options in the forms students can select for the DNP capstone

- AACN essentials answered initial questions:
  - What does it “look like”? What “forms” can it take?

  - Examples:
    - Practice change initiative, pilot study, program evaluation, quality improvement project, evaluation of a new practice model, consulting project, practice-oriented manuscript submitted for publication, research utilization project, other practice based project.
NONPF contributions

• National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties
  – Responded to the call for more detailed criteria

• NONPF Recommended Criteria for NP Scholarly Projects in the Practice Doctorate Program includes:
  – Basic characteristics of a projects
  – Types of scholarly projects (excellent detailed list)
  – Examples of scholarly projects undertaken in practice doctorate programs
  – http://www.nonpf.com
It’s all in a name: 30+ terms for DNP capstone

✓ Capstone project  ✓ Scholarly Inquiry in Nursing Practice
✓ DNP project  ✓ Practice improvement project
✓ Dissertation  ✓ EB mentoring applied project
✓ Doctoral Thesis  ✓ Comprehensive Study
✓ Clinical Practice Dissertation  ✓ Synthesis project
✓ EBP project  ✓ Scholarly leadership project
✓ Clinical inquiry project  ✓ Advanced Nursing Project
✓ Practice project or leadership project  ✓ Clinical immersion project
✓ Scholarly project  ✓ Translational Research Project
✓ DNP clinical project  ✓ System change project
✓ Residency project  ✓ Advanced clinical project or administrative project
✓ Scholarly Capstone project  ✓ Translational research scholarly initiative
✓ Clinical Scholarship: Capstone  ✓ Portfolio or clinical scholarship portfolio development
✓ Clinical Scholarship project  ✓
✓ Doctoral project  ✓
✓ Practice inquiry project  ✓
✓ Research Utilization Project  ✓
✓ Clinical research  ✓
What do you think?

• GROUP DECISION MAKING
  – 7 minutes to decide on a name your group would suggest for the DNP capstone
  – Based on what would be best for our profession, our schools, APRNs, our communities and agencies

• Do you think it is important for us to decide on preferred terminology for the DNP capstone? YES OR NO

• If so who should make the decision?
  – AACN, NONPF, a group of DNP stakeholders?
Group Suggestions

•
Final DNP project (p.20)

- Demonstrates synthesis of the student’s work and lays the foundation for future scholarship
- Produces a tangible and deliverable academic product
- Derived from the practice immersion experience
- Documents outcomes of student’s educational experiences
- Provides a measurable medium for evaluating immersion experience
- Summarizes student’s growth in knowledge and expertise
Is it possible to present all or even some of those aims in a DNP capstone?

How much does the capstone need to be tied with a practice immersion experience?

How does the breath of possible forms of ‘practice’ influence the form and the goals of the capstone?

Other values?

– Advancing practice
– Collaboration with community agencies
  • Interdisciplinary, teamwork learning
• Clinical scholarship and analytical methods for evidence-based practice (p.11)

• What is the curriculum required for DNP graduate to have the above competencies?

• Are these are the competencies that need to be developed/refined in the DNP capstone?
Faculty Recommendations: DNP Roadmap*

- Support individuals with a wide array of degrees and credentials as appropriate DNP faculty if they possess the needed knowledge and expertise.

- Engage faculty from other disciplines.

- Recognize integrated scholarship as evidence for scholarship for the awarding of appointment, promotion, and/or tenure.

- Consider a wide range of appointment options to offer the greatest flexibility for employment and utilization of DNP faculty.

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*AACN, DNP Roadmap Task Force Report. Approved by AACN Board July 20C
http://www.aacn.nche.edu/DNP/index.htm
Challenge: Faculty Development

• How can we help faculty enhance expertise to teach appropriate Practice Inquiry coursework and guide students with practice inquiry?
  – *e.g. UW Practice Inquiry Faculty Institute*

• “The DNP focuses on providing leadership for evidence-based practice. This requires competence in translating research in practice, evaluating evidence, applying research in decision-making, and implementing viable clinical innovations to change practice.”
  
  *AACN DNP FAQs, updated 2009*
Institutional Recommendations: DNP Roadmap

• Develop faculty practice arrangement to attract, retain, and adequately compensate faculty actively involved in practice

• Strengthen links with the practice environment to:
  – Develop practice opportunities for faculty
  – Develop teaching opportunities for clinician

• Encourage the development of DNP & PhD teams to provide leadership in the translation component of research

Summary: The DNP capstone of the future...

- Potential of the DNP Capstone to accomplish **MULTIPLE** goals
- Priorities for DNP capstone
  - Build student expertise in practice inquiry
  - **Contribution to advancing/improving care particularly** to our local communities, health care agencies and institutions
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Review....major points

#1 DNP capstones/projects have the potential to advance practice at the local, state and national levels

#2 School of Nursing faculty and curricula are KEY determinants of the extent to which DNP capstones will actually advance practice
Thank You!

• To AACN staff for all their support with this talk
• To UW colleagues:
  – the ‘village’ it took to develop, implement and refine the post MN and Post BSN DNP
Seeing the World Differently Through DNP Education
A Time for Mutual Support

PIONEERS!
Tolerance for uncertainty
Curriculum new and evolving
Faculty, DNP students and administration creating and refining DNP programs together
DNP Graduates and faculty co-creating new roles
In all specialty areas
Across all systems
“May we hope that when we are all dead and gone, leaders will arise who have been personally experienced the hard, practical work, the difficulties and the joys of organizing nursing reforms, and will lead far beyond anything we have done.”

Florence Nightingale
What do we think?

• What are the key issues, questions, and controversies in regard to the DNP capstone to that would benefit from our shared vision?

• What are the key issues, questions, and controversies in regard to the DNP capstone for our leadership to address?