



DNP Capstone Projects: Exemplars of Evidence-Based Practice Changes

Joyce Knestrick, PhD, CRNP, FAANP; Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, Frontier Nursing University

Barbara Anderson, DrPH, CNM, FACNM, FAAN; DNP Program Director, Frontier Nursing University

Suzan Ulrich, DrPH, CNM FACNM; Assistant Dean Graduate Nursing Program, Saint Catherine University



Purpose

This presentation describes elements of selected Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) capstone projects that have impacted and changed clinical practice

Abstract

This presentation describes elements of selected Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) capstone projects that have impacted and changed clinical practice. Linking the evidence and demonstrating the interface between original research and translational research, these exemplars have positively impacted client outcomes and have demonstrated significant, sustainable effects on policy and the practice environment. Utilizing the reflective experiences of DNP graduates with successful, sustainable projects, the authors discuss capstone development from the perspectives of strategic planning, stakeholder involvement, identification of evidence-based best practices, and use of change strategies in the workplace.

DNP Project focuses on practice based problem with an evidence-based solution.

Has 3 essential elements:

Element 1

- **Rigor**
 - Literature review- in depth , may be broader than the more traditional focused PhD review.
 - Based on literature and conceptual framework or theory
 - Based on the problem, uses rigorous methods

Element 2

- **Synthesis**
 - Synthesis of the student's work in the DNP program.
 - Related to Advanced Practice Specialty (NONPF, 2007)

Element 3

- **Sustainability**
 - Includes the engagement of other professionals lead by the student

Conflicts of interest

The authors have no conflicts of interest.

Translational Research

"bench to bedside and back" (NIH)

- Take the results of studies and refines the results for use in daily clinical practice.
- Take the practices beyond the academic setting into the community.
- Evaluate the outcomes from the above steps and provide feedback.

Successful, sustainable projects that impact practice:

- Is evidence based
- Is rooted in a theory and/or conceptual framework
- Includes the identification of key stakeholders
- Defines the problem statement and/or purpose
- Manages the scope of the project
- Defines the project type
- Identifies methods of dissemination

References

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Exemplars

A DNP student proposed a project but her initial ideas were very broad. As she worked with her chair and content expert, she realized the need for a more extensive, current review of the literature that discusses the impact on practice. She shared this deep synthesis of the literature with the nurses in her facility, helping the nurses to understand evidence-based practice.

A DNP student wanted to work with a project that involved quality improvement for a highly vulnerable population. Through her capstone project, he learned about policy analysis and development, negotiating the IRB process, and preparing a manuscript for publication that was subsequently published.

Conclusion

As the number of DNP prepared nurses grow , the need to show the changes in practice that emerge from the projects is an essential element in improving health care