Angling for the Right Degree – DNP or PhD??

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OBJECTIVES

At the end of this presentation, the learner will be able to:

1. Discuss and identify the differences in curriculum amongst some Schools of Nursing for the DNP degree plan and the PhD plan.
2. Discuss the American Association of Colleges of Nursing’s (AACN) position statement and essentials for the DNP degree.
3. Identify career paths for the DNP compared to those for the PhD.
Do I really want to do this again??
“I am always ready to learn although I do not always like being taught”

• Winston Churchill
Recommendation 5: Double the number of nurses with a doctorate by 2020.

- Schools of nursing, with support from private and public funders, academic administrators and university trustees, and accrediting bodies, should double the number of nurses with a doctorate by 2020 to add to the cadre of nurse faculty and researchers, with attention to increasing diversity.
WHY PURSUE A DOCTORATE DEGREE?

- Increase in intellectual knowledge
- Career advancement
- Evidence-based practice
- Eligibility as nursing faculty
- Increase in income
- Improvement in clinical skills
- Improvement in communication skills

“True terror is to wake up one morning and discover that your high school class is running the country”

• Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.
WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?
PHD AND DNP

PhD:

- Research Focused program
- Designed to prepare nurse scientists and scholars
DNP:

- Practice focused programs that emphasize innovation and evidence-based application of credible research findings
- Designed to prepare experts specialized in advanced nursing practice – clinical practice and executive leadership practice
Side by Side Comparison

**PhD:**
- Requires a rigorous, scholarly approach to the discipline
- Commitment to advancement of the profession
- Emphasizes theory, meta-theory, research methodology and statistics
- Completion and defense of an original research project

**DNP:**
- Requires a rigorous, scholarly approach to the discipline
- Commitment to advancement of the profession
- Emphasizes practice
- Requires an integrative practice experience and an intense practice immersion
- Carries out a practice application oriented “final Capstone project” which is an integral part of the integrative practice experience
Education is not the filling a pail, but the lighting of a fire.

- William Butler Yeats
And then it may feel like:
THE DNP ESSENTIALS

- Developed by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)

- Outline the curricular elements and competencies that must be present in programs conferring the DNP degree.

- Define the eight foundational Essentials and provide some introductory comments on specialty competencies/content.
ESSENTIALS

- Essential I: Scientific Underpinning for Practice
- Essential II: Organizational and Systems Leadership for Quality Improvement and Systems Thinking
- Essential III: Clinical Scholarship and Analytical Methods for Evidence-based Practice
- Essential IV: Information Systems/Technology and Patient Care Technology for the Improvement and Transformation of Health Care
- Essential V: Health Care Policy for Advocacy in Health Care
- Essential VI: Interprofessional Collaboration for Improving Patient and Population Health Outcomes
- Essential VII: Clinical Prevention and Population Health for Improving the Nation’s Health
- Essential VIII: Advanced Nursing Practice
SPECIALTY FOCUSED COMPETENCIES

- A major component of DNP curricula focuses on providing the requisite specialty knowledge for graduates to enact particular roles in the larger healthcare system.

- All graduates demonstrate the competencies of the eight essentials; further preparation falls into two general categories: roles that specialize as an APN with a focus on care of individuals; and roles that specialize in practice at an aggregate, systems, or organizational level.
APN Focus

- Must demonstrate practice expertise, specialized knowledge, and expanded responsibility and accountability in the care and management of individuals and families.

- APNs develop additional competencies in direct practice and in the guidance and coaching of individuals and families through developmental, health-illness, and situational transitions.
AGGREGATE/SYSTEMS/ORGANIZATIONAL FOCUS

Graduates in administrative, healthcare policy, informatics, and population-based specialties focus their practice on aggregates: populations, systems, organizations, and state or national policies.

Demonstrates competencies in conducting comprehensive organizational, systems, and/or community assessments to identify aggregate health or system needs; working with diverse stakeholders for inter- or intra-organizational achievement of health-related goals.
CAREER TRAJECTORIES

- Many of the career trajectories for the PhD and DNP overlap.

- Typically, the PhD is one that remains in Academia and conducts research/education. However, many practice settings are seeing PhD graduates in administrative positions as well.

- DNP graduates are intended to be “practice” nurses. Advanced practice positions, administrative positions, educational positions, etc. – in the operational/organizational setting. However, many DNP grads are choosing academia as a career choice.
Texas Universities Offering DNP

- Baylor College of Medicine
- Texas Christian University
- Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center
- Texas Woman’s University
- Texas Wesleyan University
- University of the Incarnate Word
- University of Texas at Arlington
- University of Texas at El Paso
- University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston
- University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio
- University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
Location of Texas Institutions with Existing or Pending DNP/DNAP Programs

Education aims to give you a boost up the ladder of knowledge. Too often, it just gives you a cramp on one of its rungs.

Martin H. Fischer
ANY CONTROVERSY??

NEVER!!

ALWAYS!!

- Nursing: Why do we need another terminal degree? Do we have enough faculty to teach this new degree? How will we differentiate the roles? Will all APNs have to get a DNP?

- Others: How will patients know a doctor from a nurse?
The roots of education are bitter, but the fruit is sweet.

Aristotle
REFERENCES

