



Melding Practice and Research: Clarifying the Objectives of the DNP Capstone Project

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Objectives

- 1. Identify selected dilemmas in conceptualization of the DNP Capstone Project
- 2. Explore the tensions between research and practice in practice doctorates in other disciplines
- 3. Apply lessons learned from other disciplines in refining the DNP Capstone requirements

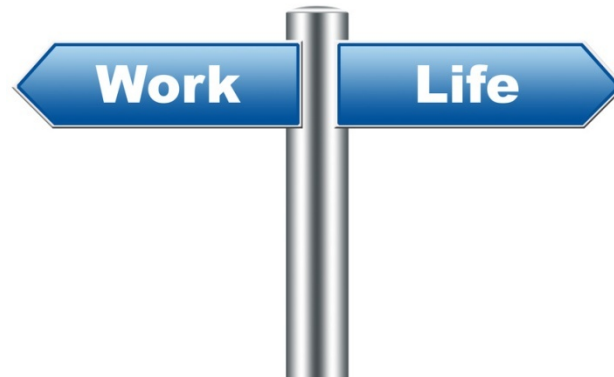
Dilemmas for the DNP



- Problems with definition of the “Capstone”
- PhD faculty teaching DNPs
 - Programs developed on the PhD model
- Students with varying research preparation
- Students present to the program with pre-conceived ideas about a Capstone, or **no ideas**

Dilemmas

- Preparation for entry level vs. advanced practice
- DNPs are often “mid-career” students
 - Disproportion between practice experience and education
 - Work expectations vs. scholarship expectations



Dilemmas experienced in other professions

- Varying research requirements in practice doctorates
 - Phelps & Gerbasi (2009)
- Research-practice tension



The *Scientist-Practitioner* Model

- Psychology—PsyD vs PhD
 - *Boulder Model*
 - *Professional Model*
- Education—EdD vs PhD
- Social Work—DSW vs PhD

What can we learn from the experiences of other practice doctorates?

- The research-practice dilemma continues
 - MD/PhD
 - PharmD/PHD
- A final project/manuscript is only one way to determine achievement of professional competence

Definitions of “Scholarship” in Nursing

- Boyer Model
 - “Scholarship of Practice”
- AACN Essentials (2006)
 - “knowledge application activities”
 - Focus on translation of new science, its application and evaluation



How best to balance the DNP curriculum?

- Current DNP curricula emphasize biostatistics, epidemiology, traditional research methods
- Need for courses in evaluation research, translational research, QI



Items to ponder. . .

- How do we negotiate the research-practice tension in our own programs?
 - What are the best ways for PhD-prepared faculty to transition to a practice inquiry model?
- Is the Capstone Project the best way to evaluate our students' achievement of DNP competencies?



Recommendations

- Develop faculty expertise in systems management, translational research, QI
- Re-frame the traditional model of scholarship to better meet the needs for *practice inquiry*

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