

## Building Bridges in Doctoral Education: Collaborative DNP and PhD Courses



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### Background

Goals and purposes of doctoral nursing education

DNP—practice-focus

PhD—research-focus

Recommendations to “bridge the gap”

Institute of Medicine (IOM)

American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN)

National Organization of Nurse Practitioner Faculties (NONPF)



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### Knowledge Gap

How to “build a bridge” for quality healthcare

Collaborative DNP/PhD roles

Education

Research

Practice

Collaborative DNP/PHD curricula and courses

Promote understanding of responsibilities

Deliver integrated courses

Foster professional relationships



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### Study Purpose

To describe the knowledge and perceptions of DNP/PhD graduate nursing students have of the theory, research, and practice roles and responsibilities of each respective group.



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### Research Methodology

IRB determined study to be exempt based is low-risk, healthy volunteers, and anonymity of responses. Consent was implied upon submission of the survey. Convenience sampling utilized to provide snapshot data.



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### Study Instrument

Developed utilizing the 22 AACN indicators  
Participants were asked to respond to each AACN indicator:

- As a function of the DNP-prepared nurse,
- As a function of the PhD-prepared nurse,
- As a function of both roles.



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### Results

Data collected from 199 participants.  
All participants were enrolled in either a DNP or a PhD in nursing program.  
Demographic information collected to describe the study participation.  
Number of potential participants unknown, as is the gender, ethnicity, or years in nursing.  
Inherent bias to the responses.



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### Demographics

Individuals age range from 20-60 years.  
Equal numbers of participants between 30-41 and 41-50 years:  
Slightly less 51-60 years,  
Fewest participants 20-30 years.  
PhD n =124.  
DNP n =68.  
117 or 60% of the study population are not Advanced Practice Nurses (APN).



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### Roles of the DNP-prepared Nurse

Based on the top five responses:  
High level of clinical expertise,  
Provision of healthcare,  
Improvement in healthcare delivery,  
Design evidence-based interventions,  
Identify gaps in evidence for practice.



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### Roles of the PhD-prepared Nurse

Based on the top five responses:

- Commitment to a research career,
- Conduct original research,
- Secure funded research,
- Development of new knowledge,
- Fulfill faculty responsibilities.



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### Roles of Both DNP and PhD-prepared Nurses

Based on the top five responses:

- Mentor other nurses,
- In depth knowledge of a particular area,
- Participate in interdisciplinary research,
- Communicate scholarship through publication and presentation,
- Leadership position in healthcare.



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### Items With Few Responses

- Healthcare policy activities.
- Utilizing theory for research and/or practice.
- Integrate research, teaching, mentoring, and service.
- Provide professional and research mentoring.



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### Statistical Analyses

Indicators with the highest number of responses were perceived as roles for both the DNP/PhD-prepared nurse:

This category received 2-3 times more responses than either the DNP or PhD category.

Correlational techniques failed to identify any trend among the responses to age, APN status, or educational track.

Fisher's exact test (there were indicators with <5 responses) revealed the 'high level of clinical expertise' item, was perceived as a role for the DNP-prepared nurse (0.0497).



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### Conclusion

Responses on the 22 AACN indicators demonstrate:

- DNP-prepared nurse has a clinical focus,
- PhD-prepared nurse has a research focus,

Shared roles and responsibilities,

Opportunities for collaboration:

- Curricula
- Course Assignments
- Research



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### Future Plan

Replicate study with a larger sample.

Plan additional integrated course work:

- BSN to DNP/PhD core courses;
- Policy, Graduate theory and MSN-level Research, Culture, Ethics, Healthcare Systems.
- Epidemiology and Biostatistics.
- State of the Science/Synthesis Review of the Literature Course.



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### Acknowledgement

DNP Graduate Student Catherine Spangler  
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### Questions?



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