

**Title:**

The Lived Experience of DNPs Returning to School in Pursuit of a PhD in Nursing

**Michael Greco, PhD, DNP, CRNA**

*Northwell Health, Staten Island, NY, USA*

**ACCEPTED**

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**Session Title:**

Education Poster Session 1 (Saturday/Sunday, 16 & 17 November)

**Slot:**

EDU PST1: Sunday, 17 November 2019: 11:45 AM-12:15 PM

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**Abstract Describes:**

Completed Work/Project

**Applicable Category:**

Clinical, Academic, Students, Leaders, Researchers

**Keywords:**

Clinical Doctorate, DNP to PhD and Returning to School

**References:**

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### **Abstract Summary:**

Unless we as nurses understand the essence of practicing DNP-prepared nurses actively pursuing the PhD in nursing, nursing will remain in the unknowing of the perspective of having clinical nurses practicing as nurse scientists.

### **Content Outline:**

Historically, the terminal degree for the nursing profession has been the PhD. The profession has created another doctoral degree called the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) intended for clinical nurses to implement evidence-based practice (IOM, 2010). Many nurses who have earned this terminal degree in practice are returning to school to pursue a second nursing doctorate degree, which is the research-focused PhD degree. This study and poster is meaningful to nursing because unless the essence of the experience of a DNP-prepared clinician actively pursuing the PhD in nursing is understood, nursing will remain uninformed of this practice, which is a responsibility of nursing.

The purpose of this qualitative research using a heuristic, descriptive phenomenology approach was to discover the experiences of DNPs who have returned to school and are in pursuit or have pursued a PhD in nursing.

A transcendental, phenomenological approach, guided by the interpretivist paradigm to gain an understanding of the lived experience of DNP-prepared nurses in pursuit of a PhD in nursing.

A qualitative methodology was employed using phenomenology as its basis. Purposive and snowball sampling were used to select 12 DNP participants for semi-structured interviews and provided data regarding their lived experience of returning to school in their pursuit for a PhD in nursing. Data analysis was guided by Moustakas' (1994) transcendental phenomenology.

Three themes were identified in the experiences of the six women and six men who participated: *Wanting to Know Something More, Social-Individual Tensions, and Challenges to Transformational Learning.*

The DNP participants in this study were on a journey, searching for something more in order to gain professional and personal fulfillment. The participants revealed characteristics integral to being a DNP who has returned to school in pursuit of a PhD in nursing which included the desire to expand on their

limited research knowledge and the tensions and challenges to transformational learning surrounding this quest.

**Topic Selection:**

Education Poster Session 1 (Saturday/Sunday, 16 & 17 November) (25742)

**Abstract Text:**

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