National Survey of Opinions and Preferences About the Required Culminating Project of DNP Programs

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Purpose

• Opinions of nurses involved in DNP practice and education
  • Necessity and rigor of required final DNP program scholarship
  • Preferences for what a DNP doctoral product should be called
  • Use of the term “dissertation” for DNP scholarship
Methods

• 10 question online survey
• Administered anonymously via Survey Monkey
  • Blog on Doctors of Nursing Practice Website (http://doctorsofnursingpractice.ning.com/)
  • Personal e-mails to DNPs and academics involved in DNP education nationwide

• June to October 2014
  • IRB approval UOPX
“It's a hot topic, and I go apoplectic when folks start talking about a "clinical dissertation" - DNP projects are not dissertations in any way. ”
“DNPs do not complete dissertations… I would wager that there is probably a rare exception when the quality of work rises to the level of dissertation... the preponderance of DNP "scholarly projects" are not even close to meeting traditional expectations for a dissertation.”
“I talked with someone ... last Spring who said her DNP program couldn't handle so many project(s) that required so much work for faculty, so they're having their projects all be posters.”
“Having attended many international conferences on “prof docs” ... in Europe, I can tell you that they’re all not only perplexed that nursing in the U.S. created this nebulous "project" for our DNP degrees, - but many are appalled. There are no standards for scholarship across programs, which the Europeans find bizarre. In Europe, there are over 250 difference professional degree programs having been in existence since the 1980's, - all of which REQUIRE a research dissertation. A dissertation is in fact, frequently considered the hallmark of "Doctorateness", so to have a terminal degree program endorsed by a national educational organization that prohibits this is simply bizarre. DNP graduates cannot be "too scholarly".”
“... all the "DNS" are (now) being "converted" to "PhD"... really? And rationale... so they are not "confused" with DNPs. They didn't complete a PhD... so it's a fake credential and everybody knows it.”
“Having just viewed your survey, I would like to share with you my impression that item #9 is poorly worded and did not present me with an answer choice that was palatable.”
N = 849
49 states (except South Dakota), Canada and Puerto Rico
By Accreditation Region

- Western: 31
- Northwestern: 53
- North Central: 291
- Southern: 277
- Middle States: 100
- New England: 53
Primary Position in Nursing
n = 843

- Academia: 411, 49%
- Practice: 273, 32%
- Administration: 68, 8%
- Other: 81, 10%
- Not employed in nursing: 10, 1%
Years as an RN (n= 665) Mean 26.3 SD 10.97 Range 1-55
Age (years, n = 821) Mean 51.5 SD 9.4 Range 25-76
Relationship with the DNP
N = 849

Note: Colors

- DNP: 55%
- DNP Student: 24%
- DNP Student ... to be: 3%
- DNP Faculty: 15%
- Non-DNP Doctoral Faculty: 2%
- Missing: 1%
Many practice doctorates do not require a culminating scholarly work for program completion (for example: MDs/DOs, DDS/DDMs, PharmDs, etc.). Should the completion of culminating scholarship be required for program completion in DNP programs?

• Yes
• No
Should DNP Culminating Scholarship be Required
n = 842

Proportion (%) of Each Group

Yes
No
Expectations of Rigor

Should the same expectations of rigor apply to culminating scholarly work across all nursing doctoral programs (PhD, DNS, DNSc, DNP, etc.)?

• Yes
• No
Expectations of Rigor Across Nursing Doctorates
n = 847
Earning a DNP degree requires completion of final culminating scholarly work. There is much debate and no consensus about what to call this final scholarship. What would you prefer the culminating scholarly work in a DNP program be called?

- Capstone
- Dissertation
- Project
- Thesis
- _______ Other
Preferred Title for DNP Culminating Scholarship: Total Group
n = 811

- Capstone: 237
- Dissertation: 253
- Project: 207
- Thesis: 32
- Other: 84
Preferred Title for DNP Culminating Scholarship: By Subgroup

n = 811

Proportion (%) of Each Group

DNPs

Faculty (not DNPs)

Capstone  Dissertation  Project  Thesis  Other

Proportion (%) of Each Group

DNPs  DNP Students  DNP Students ... to be  DNP Faculty  Non-DNP Doctoral Faculty
Preferred Title by Accreditation Region

- Project: 53
- Capstone: 277
- Dissertation: 291

Preferred Title for DNP Culminating Scholarship by Region
n = 805

- Western
- Southern
- Northwest
- North Central
- New England
- Middle States
In many non-PhD doctoral degree programs (for example: EdDs, PsychDs, ScDs, etc.) the culminating scholarly work is called a “dissertation.” In nursing, should the use of the term “dissertation” be restricted and only used in reference to the culminating scholarly work of nursing PhD programs?

• Yes
• No
“Dissertation” only for Nursing PhD Culminating Scholarship
n = 841

Proportion (%) of Each Group

Faculty (not DNPs)

DNPs

Proportion (%) of Each Group

Yes
No

DNP
DNP Student
DNP Student ... to be
DNP Faculty
Non-DNP Doctoral Faculty
Concluding Thoughts

• Many DNPs in academia

• Support for DNP program culminating scholarship

• Expectation of rigor for all nursing doctoral scholarship

• Divergent opinions on the title for DNP culminating scholarship
Questions or Comments?

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