

The Doctor of Nursing Practice: Promoting Partnerships and Reducing Health Disparities Among Vulnerable Populations



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PURPOSE

The purpose of this presentation is to describe how a collaborative environment was created between two universities to support Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) students as they build their programs of scholarly activity to meet the needs of our vulnerable populations.

BACKGROUND

The University of North Carolina at Charlotte (UNC Charlotte) and Western Carolina University (WCU) established a partnership called the UNC Charlotte/WCU Dual DNP program, awarding the terminal degree of the DNP. Together these two institutions connected to provide the context for the Dual DNP program development, implementation and evaluation.

UNC Charlotte is North Carolina's urban research university. Located in the state's largest metropolitan area, UNC Charlotte is among the fastest growing universities in the UNC System (UNCC, 2016). In contrast as the western most institution in the University of North Carolina system, WCU provides comprehensive educational opportunities to residents in the state's western region and attracts students from around the globe to explore the region's natural diversity. Founded in 1889 Western Carolina now provides an education to more than 10,000 students in undergraduate and graduate programs (WCU, 2016).

2017 DUAL DNP GRADUATES



DESCRIPTION OF THE CURRICULUM

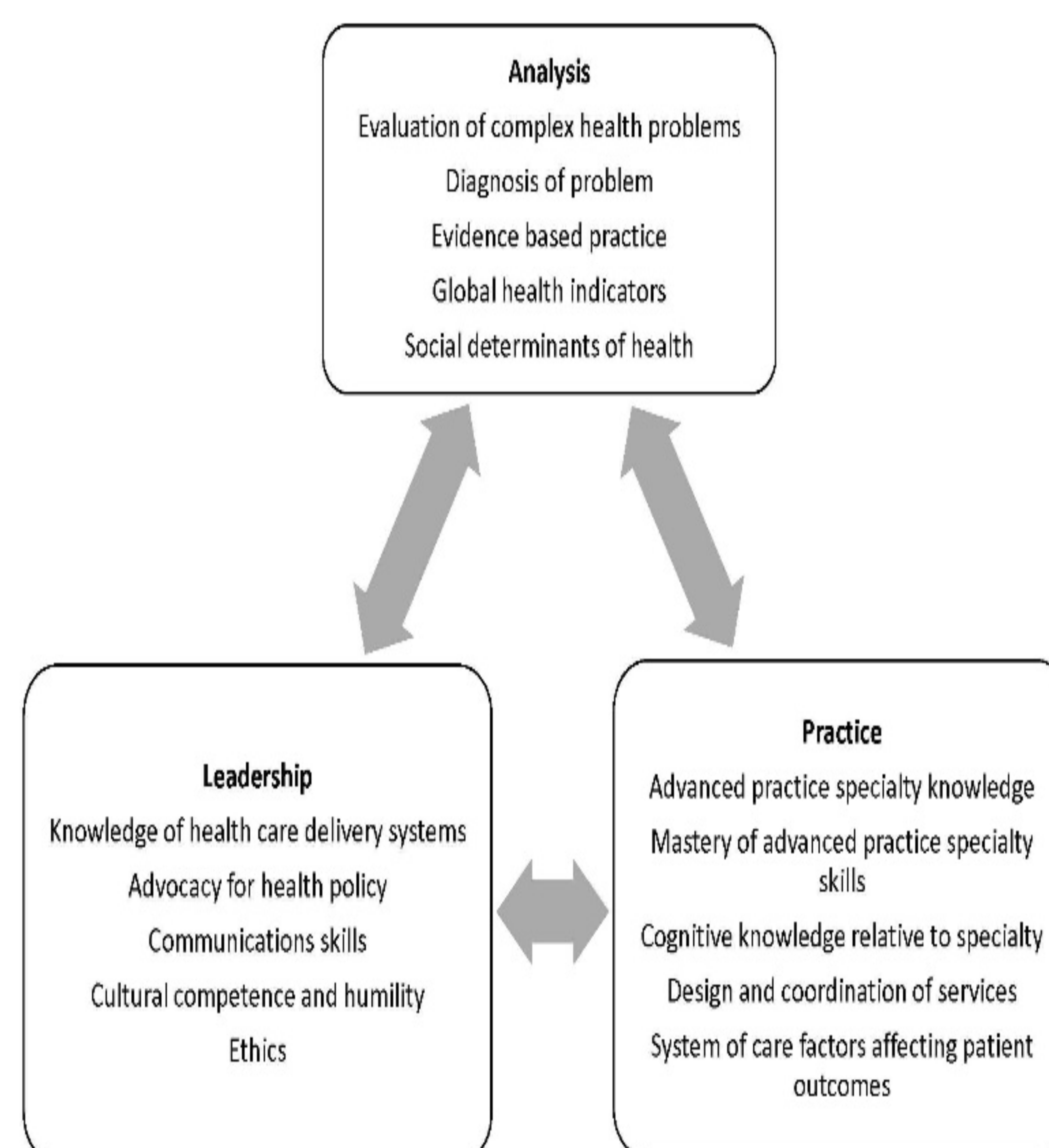
The DNP curriculum has three main foci: analysis, leadership, and practice. The common thread between these foci is the utilization of evidence-based practice and data driven methods that improve the quality of care and safety of patients.

• **Analysis:** Content in this area prepares students to translate research to evaluate the credibility of the evidence presented; analyze complex healthcare systems; examine global health issues and practices; and understand complex social determinates of health in an effort to guide appropriate interventions across an ever-expanding complex health system.

• **Leadership:** This content area prepares students to assume leadership positions in a specialty area through attainment and use of knowledge and skills in work across disciplines, negotiation, professional values, leadership concepts, professional and business ethics, and innovation in health care settings.

• **Practice:** The focus in this area is on the leadership knowledge and skills needed to practice in a specialty area of advanced practice. The content for this area challenges students to establish and nurture interprofessional collaborative relationships, master the practice of delegation, and translate best evidence into practice in order to improve patient outcomes.

DUAL DNP CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK



METHODS

This is a case history describing the innovative approach of the collaborative process two universities shared to build a growing and successful accredited DNP Program.

1. The first step in developing a successful collaborative environment was planning the partnership.
2. Next, effective approaches in assisting students with their scholarship were identified. DNP students were encouraged to engage in interdisciplinary, scholarly work as they expand and improve innovative methods to deliver care to our most vulnerable populations.
3. Finally, program evaluation was significant in the identification of critical elements of an effective partnership.

DISCUSSION

Universities must provide the needed opportunities, resources, and mentoring to support both faculty and their students. Successful inter-institutional collaboration and university investment in the development of the Dual DNP Program has helped to increase the knowledge and skills of DNP students as they build their programs of scholarly activity to effect change in vulnerable populations served.

IMPLICATIONS IN NURSING

The Dual Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) degree program at UNC Charlotte and Western Carolina University (WCU) is a practice doctorate in nursing that awards the terminal DNP degree. The Dual DNP degree prepares graduates to analyze systems of care and provide transformational leadership that will improve patient safety, quality of care, and implement evidence-based culturally competent care practices. The purpose of the program also is to prepare graduates who will practice nursing at the highest level of their specialty.

References

- University of North Carolina at Charlotte. (2016). Retrieved from www.uncc.edu
Western Carolina University. (2016). About Western Carolina. Retrieved from www.wcu.edu