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# Doctor of Nursing Practice Roles in Academia

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*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Health Sciences

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Jodi Raisor

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Walden University  
2019

Abstract

Doctor of Nursing Practice Roles in Academia

by

Jodi Raisor

MSN/ED, Walden University, 2014

BSN, Grand Canyon University, 2011

Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Doctor of Nursing Practice

Walden University

May 2019

## Abstract

Over 15,000 master's and doctoral degree students in the United States were denied admission to nursing schools in 2014 because of insufficient nursing faculty. In 2016, over 64,000 undergraduate and graduate students were unable to gain admission to nursing school due to the effects of faculty shortages. This project explored the role of the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP)-prepared nurse in academic settings using a systematic review of the literature to determine the role of DNP-prepared nurses in academia. Souza's systematic review model and Melnyk's levels of evidence were used to guide the search, review, and the selection of scholarly articles published between 2005 to 2019. A chart of preferred reporting items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses chart was used to organize and select 14 articles meeting the review criteria and included in the analysis. Four themes emerged from the analysis of literature: role in academia from the dean's and director's perspective, DNP role as a teacher, preparation for faculty role, and leaving the faculty role. Confusion over the role of the DNP in academia was also identified as a factor affecting DNPs in academic practice settings; however, DNP-prepared nurses have the clinical experience, knowledge, and skills to provide evidence-based teaching and fill the gap in practice needed in academic settings. This project may promote positive social change by raising awareness of the role of the DNP in academia to reduce the faculty shortage.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this project to my family who have been with me and have supported me unconditionally.

## Acknowledgments

I would like to acknowledge and thank Dr Janice Long who has been by my side and has helped me throughout this project. Thank you!

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## Section 1: Nature of the Project

### **Introduction**

Nursing shortages affect all healthcare settings and all aspects of healthcare, in particular, patient care. Tyczkowski & Reilly (2017) stated that the nursing faculty shortage is a pressing issue to address and is due to aging faculty, retention issues, and increased need for doctorally prepared nurses. The literature is replete with reports of clinical bedside nurse shortages; however, nursing positions that require advanced degrees also suffer from shortages of nurses (McDermid, Peters, Daly, 2012). Nurses are needed to educate new nurses, to provide leadership and mentorship in evidence-based practice, and to serve in administrative roles that require higher educational preparation (Hammatt & Nies, 2015). In fact, many nursing academic programs have waitlists because they do not have adequate faculty to teach in the programs that can prepare not only undergraduate nurses, but also master's and doctorally prepared nurses. In 2014, 15,288 applicants were turned away from master's and doctoral programs due to faculty shortages (Tyczkowski & Reilly, 2017), and the volume of candidates for undergraduate and graduate nursing programs exceeded 64,000 in 2016 (American Association of Colleges of Nursing [AACN], 2017). Faculty are needed to address the demand for qualified teachers; Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) prepared nurses stand as a viable and available resource for filling this gap.

The DNP degree is founded upon eight essential elements. Hawkins and Nezat (2009) described the eight essentials as: (a) scientific underpinnings for practice, (b) organizational and systems leadership for quality improvement and systems thinking, (c)

clinical scholarship and analytical methods for evidence-based practice, (d) information systems/technology for the improvement and transformation of healthcare, (e) healthcare policy for advocacy in healthcare, (f) interprofessional collaboration for improving patient and population health outcomes, (g) clinical prevention and population health for improving the nation's health, and (h) advanced nursing practice. The Essentials for DNP's education competency tool provides a guide that shows how the DNP prepared nurse can work across multiple settings including academic and other educational settings.

The advantages of employing DNPs as educators include their practical knowledge of nursing, their focus on application of evidence-based practice, their education and experience, and their broad perspective of systems-based issues, which helps to prepare nursing students for the rigors and challenges of nursing roles (Hammatt and Nies, 2015). Redman, Presslet, Furspan and Potempa (2014) found that DNP prepared nurses contribute to quality of care through their scholarly output related to clinical practice.

To understand the role of the DNP prepared nurse in academic settings, a systematic review of the literature examining published studies and articles addressing the role of the DNP in academic settings was the focus of this project. I used peer reviewed articles and publications from professional organizations such as the AACN in conducting the systematic review. The results promote positive social change by raising the awareness of the role of DNP prepared nurses in academic and other educational settings to help decrease the overall nursing shortage and therefore, potentially improve

patient outcomes. Section 1 covers the problem statement, the purpose, the nature of the project, significance and a summary of the section.

### **Problem Statement**

The nursing practice problem that was the focus of this doctoral project is the need for nursing faculty who can help provide a source of quality academic education while bridging the gap in the shortage of nurses in the United States. DNP prepared nurses may affect the nursing shortage in a positive way if they are prepared for academic roles. There were 78,089 potential nursing students who were turned away or denied admission due to lack of nursing faculty in 2013 (Laurencelle, Scanlan, & Brett, 2016). Nursing opportunities are expected to grow at a faster rate than before and projections are for an estimated one million nurses needed by 2020 (Haddad & Toney-Butler, 2018). While universities and colleges seek PhD prepared faculty to fill the much-needed roles of nurse faculty in schools of nursing, DNP prepared nurses may help to bridge the gap in nurse faculty that remains by serving in higher education roles as academic and clinical faculty.

Melnyk (2013) found that the need to improve the current health care system takes both DNP prepared nurses and PhD nurses working together. The AACN whitepaper on the role of the DNP describes the DNP role as one that translates existing research to practice (AACN, 2015) rather than discovering new research. Udulis and Mancuso (2015) found that the DNP degree could ultimately fulfill certain roles such as academic, research, and policy and health care within the nursing profession. Agger, Oermann & Lynn (2014) found that there was no difference in teaching responsibilities

between PhD and DNP prepared nurses in schools of nursing; they had the same roles regardless of education track. Oermann, Lynn, and Agger (2016) found that most deans and directors believed that DNP faculty were prepared adequately for the educator role. In this project I investigated the current literature to determine what assets DNP prepared nurses can bring to nursing education in academia.

Academia is experiencing a shortage of nurse educators that has led to waitlists of student nurses, which further compounds the nursing shortage. This systematic review was conducted to examine current articles that related to DNP education and their role in academia. DNP prepared nurses will be useful in academia to help educate nursing students and lower the nurse faculty shortage (Laurencelle et al., 2016).

This project is significant to the field of nursing in that it may help raise awareness that DNP prepared nurses are uniquely positioned to address the shortage of nurses by filling the gap in the supply of nurse educators in academic settings. The shortage of nursing faculty is not only a problem in the United States but has also been recognized as a global concern (Nardi & Gyurko, 2013; Thompson et al., 2014). The lack of nurse educators impacts the supply of registered nurses at a time of increased demand (Nardi & Gyurko, 2013, Thompson et al., 2014). Nursing shortages lead to errors, higher morbidity and mortality rates (“Nurse Shortage”, 2016). Therefore, there is a need to address the nursing shortage as well as the faculty shortage (Laurencelle et al., 2016) by identifying the options of DNP prepared nurses as clinical faculty in academic settings.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this systematic review was to examine evidence from the literature that can be used in determining the role of DNP prepared nurses in academia. The meaningful gap in practice that this project addressed was the use of DNP nurses in academia to provide qualified faculty to teach future nurses in all levels of practice. This project may contribute to a potential decrease in the nursing faculty shortage and can in the long run help reduce the nursing shortage. This doctoral project has the potential to address the gap in practice by using current, published articles or other credible sources to support that DNP prepared nurses can play a significant role in academia by mentoring and educating nurses and helping to decrease the nursing faculty and nursing shortage. Decreasing the nursing shortage may promote improved access to care for patients and ultimately better health outcomes. The guiding practice-focused question that this doctoral project addressed was: What are the roles of DNP prepared nurses in academia?

### **Nature of the Doctoral Project**

This doctoral project used a systematic review of the literature to study the role of the DNP prepared nurse in academic settings. A literature review is the summation of information that supports the research question being asked (Rowley & Slack, 2014). The systematic literature review will assist in identifying, selecting, appraising, and synthesizing the information found from the literature on a subject matter (Bettany-Saltikov, 2012). Oermann and Hays (2011) stated that a systemic literature review attempts to give the author an answer to a clinical or research problem.

The framework to conduct a systematic literature review was based on Fineout-Overholt et al.'s (2010) method of critical appraisal of the evidence. Fineout-Overholt et al. (2010) stated that there is a hierarchy of literature evidence that can be categorized into seven areas. Level one is the highest area and analyzes systematic reviews and meta-analyses. Level two is randomized control trials. Level three is control trials without randomization. Level four is control and cohort studies. Level five is systematic reviews of descriptive or qualitative studies. Level six is descriptive or qualitative studies. Level seven is expert opinion or consensus. All levels of evidence were included in this systematic review of the literature.

A search for possible sources of evidence was conducted using the Walden University Library, with a timeframe of publications from 2005 through 2018. This time frame was chosen because in 2004, AACN voted to endorse a position statement on the practice doctorate for nursing practice (AACN, 2019). A position statement includes why a DNP is needed and what recommendations is needed. In 2006, AACN voted to endorse the Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice (AACN, 2019). The Commission of Collegiate Nursing Education accredited DNP programs in 2008 (AACN, 2019). The databases that were for the systematic literature review included but were not limited to: CINAHL, (MEDLINE), MEDLINE with full text, Academic Search Complete, Cochrane Library, and PubMed. Other resources that used included American Nurses Association, textbooks, books, federal guidelines, and state guidelines, when applicable.

DNP nurses are uniquely positioned to educate new nurses and to assume roles in a variety of academic and clinical education settings. To describe the role of DNP nurses, this systematic literature review will assist in identifying that DNP nurses can help to fill the need for faculty to teach the next generation of nurses. For this doctoral project, I searched the literature to identify and clarify the role of the DNP nurse as an educator in a variety of settings including in academia. The purpose of this project was to identify what roles a DNP prepared nurse can fulfill in academia to help support and educate nurses to decrease the nurse and nurse faculty shortage.

### **Significance**

The significance of this systematic review of literature was to provide published evidence of the DNP prepared nurses' role in academia. Based on their education and experience, DNP nurses are a great asset to colleges and universities (Hammatt & Nies, 2015). Increasing DNP nurses who can teach in academic settings may help decrease the nurse faculty shortage. Chase and Pruitt (2005) noted that nursing is in a crisis and that the major crisis revolves around frontline providers and nurse educators. Without faculty, nursing schools and universities cannot produce bedside nurses. Evans (2005) stated that nursing schools cannot boost enrollment for undergraduates due to the faculty shortage. The shortage of nursing faculty is a global concern (Nardi & Gyurko, 2013, Thompson et al., 2014). With an increase in demand of Registered Nurses, lack of nurse educators impacts this supply (Nardi & Gyurko, 2013, Thompson et al., 2014). Incorporating roles for the DNP to teach and learning more about what DNPs can bring to academia can help decrease the nursing faculty shortage. Redman et al. (2014) found that DNPs have



assumed important roles in clinical practice and education and have a place in academia. The findings of this project may be transferable to other types of roles for the DNP practice.

### **Summary**

In the United States, 78,089 potential students were denied admission to baccalaureate and graduate nursing programs in 2013 due to faculty shortages (AACN, 2013). The nursing field is still learning about the DNP degree and what it can do. Udliis and Mancuso (2016), stated that there is confusion and disagreement when it comes to the DNP degree, and it continues even though this degree is rapidly and steadily growing. The purpose of this doctoral paper is to review the available literature and help to determine what the role of the DNP is regarding academia.

## Section 2: Background and Context

### **Introduction**

The practice problem for this project was to determine the role of DNP prepared nurses in academia. The use of DNP prepared nurses in academia offers an option for filling the current and projected shortfall of nursing faculty to teach new nurses. Several authors have discussed the role of DNP nurses in academia as a means of reducing the faculty shortage. Chism (2010) stated that schools of nursing will be an employment setting for DNP graduates. Edwardson (2010) noted that DNP graduates will most likely expand into the teaching settings. DNP prepared nurses have the clinical experience, theory knowledge, and the evidence-based practice knowledge to be able to share and educate new nurses. Oermann et al. (2016) found that deans and directors of nursing programs anticipate an increase in hiring DNP prepared nurses into nursing education programs. The purpose of this project was to systematically review current literature to examine the role of DNP prepared nurses in academia.

For this DNP project I conducted a systematic review of the literature following the guidelines published in the Walden DNP manual. The purpose of the review was to identify the role of DNP prepared nurses in nursing academic settings. In this section, I review the following: concepts, models and theories, which include the Souza, Silva, & Carvalho (2010) six stages of project literature review, relevance to nursing practice, local background and context, evidence on the relevance of the problem, the role of the DNP student in the project, and a summary.

## Concepts and Models

### Six Stages of Systematic Literature Review

For this systematic review of the literature, the model chosen to guide the project was the six steps of the systematic review by Souza et al. (2010). Theories, frameworks, and models are useful for organizing a clinical program to help planners understand factors influencing health behaviors and interactions with the environment (Smitz Naranjo & Priya, 2011). The conceptual framework for this project was the adapted literature review by Souza et al. (2010). Using different data sources can often lead to errors and bias, but having a systematic and rigorous approach such as use of the systematic review framework can reduce the bias and errors. Jahan, Naveed, Zeshan, and Tahir (2016) stated that systematic review provides unbiased view of the studies chosen. The following is the process for preparing a literature review using the integrative review methodology by Souza et al. (2010).

1. Preparing the guiding question
2. Searching or sampling the literature
3. Data collection
4. Critical analysis of the studies included
5. Discussion of results
6. Presentation of the systematic review

Even though Souza's model is for an integrative review, it served as a guide for this systematic review project. This model helped guide me with the use of Melnyk's level for evidence, which served as grading criteria, and the Prisma flowchart for organization of

articles for identifying and determining the number of articles used. This combination helped ensure that this systematic review flowed and was organized appropriately to help facilitate further research.

Rodgers and Knafl (2000) stated that an integrative review summarizes past empirical or theoretical literature to give a more comprehensive understanding of a healthcare problem. Systematic reviews can build nursing science, formulate research questions, and propose the need for future research and policy initiatives (Souza et al., 2010; Whitemore & Knafl, 2005). This methodology allows combining experimental and nonexperimental research, which can play a greater role in evidence-based nursing practice. Despite similarities between the different reviews (meta-analyses, systematic reviews, qualitative reviews, and integrative reviews), they differ in sampling, purpose, and type of analysis. The goal of this systematic review was to review evidence or the lack of evidence by searching through combined data of theoretical and empirical literature. The varied sampling frame of the systematic review could potentially result in revealing a concept, theory, or healthcare problem important to nursing (Souza et al., 2010; Whitemore & Knafl, 2005).

### **Relevance to Nursing Practice**

This doctoral project has relevance to nursing practice due to the fact that nursing has a shortage of nurses and nurse faculty. Aquino, Lee, Spawn and Bishop-Royse (2018) stated that data released by the AACN showed that 1,565 positions were vacant in 832 reporting nursing schools for academic year 2017-2018. Nursing schools need to see the knowledge that DNP prepared nurses bring to academia. Trautman, Idzik, Hammersia,

Rosseter (2018) stated that nurses prepared at the doctoral level make important contributions that help to shape nursing practice. Hammatt and Nies (2005) stated that advantages to employing DNP prepared nurses are due to their practical knowledge of nursing, application of evidence-based practice, and their education and experience in nursing leadership. Once they see that DNP prepared nurses can instruct and teach in all levels of academia, this will help to bring in more students to nursing and help to decrease the nursing shortage. There are many issues contributing to the nursing shortage; however, increasing DNP nurses in academia will be a start at mitigating the shortage. Hammatt and Nies (2005) stated that universities are embracing DNP prepared nurses for educator positions because they have a strong practicing background and nursing is a practicing degree. DNP nurses can bring a wealth clinical and didactic knowledge to the classroom setting because of their bedside nursing knowledge and skills. DNP prepared nurses have studied evidence-based practice throughout their education and used it in their work experience (Hammatt & Nies, 2005); they can use this knowledge in teaching nursing students to become more familiar with and involved in evidence-based practice from the beginning of their nursing careers. Many nursing academic programs have waitlists due to shortage of faculty to teach in the programs who can prepare not only undergraduate nurses, but also master's and doctorally prepared nurses. In 2014, 15,288 applicants were turned away from master's and doctoral programs due to faculty shortages (Tyczkowski & Reilly, 2017), and the volume of candidates for undergraduate and graduate nursing programs exceeded 64,000 in 2016 (AACN 2017).

## **Background and Context**

This project was conducted to discuss how the DNP prepared nurse will benefit nursing academia. The project was important as a means to raise awareness of the need to address the current and projected nursing shortage. A shortage of nurses can lead to lower quality patient outcomes and nurse burnout. This is particularly concerning in view of the reality that the need for nurses is expected to grow at a faster rate than before with an estimated shortfall of close to one million nurses by 2020 (Haddad & Toney-Butler, 2018). With this increase in the numbers of nurses needed, a corresponding increase in faculty is projected to be needed to educate nurses to fill the gap in the nursing workforce. DNP prepared nurses are suited for this opportunity and will bring clinical and experiential knowledge to new students. Redman et al. (2014) found that DNPs have assumed important roles in clinical practice and education and are viable options as faculty in academia.

This doctoral paper adds to the nursing field by supplying evidence that DNP prepared nurses are prepared to take on the role of educator in academia. DNP prepared nurses have a wealth of clinical practice and evidence-based nursing knowledge and are able to bring scholarship into nursing practice. They are prepared to translate existing knowledge to practice, promoting improvements in practice. Hammatt and Nies (2005) stated the DNP prepared nurses have an added knowledge of scientific inquiry that helps them bridge evidence to practice, which in turn can help improve patient outcomes. Evidence-based practice is now a standard practice in the clinical settings and because DNP prepared nurses have encountered evidence-based practice throughout their

education (Hammatt & Nies, 2005), they can use this knowledge in teaching nursing students to become more familiar with and involved in evidence-based practice from the beginning of their nursing career. Hammatt and Nies (2005) stated that advantages to employing DNP prepared nurses are their practical knowledge of nursing, application of evidence-based practice, and their education and experience in nursing leadership.

### **Role of the Doctor of Nursing Practice Student**

My role in this doctoral project was to examine the literature for information on the role of the DNP prepared nurse in the academia arena. My background is in patient care with a master's in nursing education. I enjoy teaching and would like to get more involved in the education of nursing students from prelicensure programs to doctoral programs. Being prepared as a DNP student, it would be very helpful to know the role that the profession of nursing and healthcare establishes for a DNP and try to improve the role options to move the DNP role forward, especially in academia. My motivation for this project was to be able to teach nursing, particularly online. There are many postings that require a Ph.D. degree and not necessarily a DNP degree. In the past, before the DNP, most positions wanted a Ph.D. degree. The DNP is a newer degree and there is some confusion about the DNP prepared nurse role. This project will bring to light that DNP prepared nurses have a role in academia and can be very beneficial to nursing education. A potential bias that may arise is that the I pursuing a DNP degree; therefore, this may have biased the writing and information presented. I strived to be unbiased in my approach using current peer-reviewed research so that all statements are well supported.

### **Summary**

The use of DNP prepared nurses in academia will serve many roles. They will help to decrease the nurse faculty shortage as well as the overall nursing shortage. They have the experience and knowledge to be successful in the academic role. Colleges and universities are looking at hiring more DNP prepared nurses into their nursing programs. DNP prepared nurses are a great asset to the nursing professional in advancing nursing and supporting evidence-based practice in nursing education. In section 3, I discuss the practice-focused question, sources of evidence, and analysis and synthesis.



### Section 3: Collection and Analysis of Evidence

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this doctoral project was to synthesize the current literature regarding shortage of faculty and the role of DNP nurses in academia. There is currently a shortage of faculty in nursing, which leads to an overall shortage of nurses. Tyczkowski & Reilly (2017) stated that the nursing faculty shortage is not secret and is due to aging faculty, retention issues, and increased need for more DNP prepared nurses. Based on a DNP's education and experience, they will be able to bring a wealth of knowledge to academia to help educate and shape new nurses as well as seasoned nurses looking to advance their education. Redman et al. (2014) found that DNPs have assumed important roles in clinical practice and education and have a place in academia

In Section 3 I discuss the practice-focused question, sources of evidence, and analysis and synthesis.

#### **Practice-Focused Question**

The guiding practice question that I addressed was:

PFQ: What are the roles of DNP prepared nurses in academia?

The purpose of this project was to systematically review current literature to identify the roles that DNP prepared nurses have in academia. This aligns to the practice-focused question by using current literature to support the need of DNP prepared nurses in academia. There is a shortage of nursing faculty that the DNP can help to close. This question was answered based on current literature. Identifying the role that DNP nurses can play in academia will lead to an increase in nursing faculty and help close the gap so

that there will be more students admitted to the nursing programs, which will help decrease the nursing shortage overall.

### **Sources of Evidence**

The purpose of this project was to collect, evaluate, and synthesize the best available evidence relevant to the roles of DNPs and their specific place in academia. The source of evidence used to address the practice-focused question was the current published literature. This evidence emerged from a systematic review of primary published sources of peer-reviewed journal articles or other levels of evidence. Databases and search engines that I used included CINHALL, PubMed, Walden Library, Cochrane library, Joanna Briggs Institute and Medline. Specialty organizations and journals that I used included *American Journal of Nursing*, *Journal of Nursing Education*, *Nurse Educator*, *American Association of Colleges of Nursing*, and *National League of Nursing*. I accessed these in search of current evidence within a timeframe of 2005 through 2018. The evidence was the form of qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, systematic reviews, and meta-analysis studies. Further sources of evidence included published white papers and presentations from the AACN.

### **Published Outcomes and Research**

The topic that I chose is important to nursing. Nursing currently has a shortage in nurses and nursing faculty. To produce qualified nurses, schools and colleges of nursing need qualified nurse faculty. Hammatt and Nies (2015) stated that DNP is a practice doctorate that combined with a strong practice background and broader knowledge of systems-based issues, which gives DNP nurses the tools to prepare nursing students for

the rigors and challenges of the nursing role. With the recommendation of nurses needing to have terminal degrees, DNP prepared nurses will be able to help fill the shortage of nursing faculty. This search of the literature included the following databases from Walden Library: CINHAL, PubMed, Cochrane library, Joanna Briggs Institute and Medline. Search terms included *DNP nurses and academia*, *DNP nurses and faculty*, *DNP nurses and teaching*, *DNP prepared and academia*, *DNP prepared and teaching*, and *academia and nurses*.

### **Inclusion Criteria**

The inclusion criteria for this systematic review were articles that were peer-reviewed qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods, systematic reviews, or met-analysis studies. Further sources of evidence included published white papers and presentations from the AACN. Sources of evidence had a timeframe of 2005 through 2018. This time frame was chosen because in 2004, AACN voted to endorse the position statement on the practice doctorate for nursing practice (AACN, 2019). A position statement includes why a DNP is needed and what recommendations is needed. English language articles only were used with evidence levels of I-VII (Appendix B) as defined by Melnyk et al.'s (2017) guide to the hierarchy of evidence-based studies.

### **Exclusion Criteria**

I excluded articles that did not focus on the roles of DNP prepared nurses, specifically in academia.

## **Analysis and Synthesis**

The evidence that was collected during the systematic literature review was recorded, tracked, and organized using Microsoft Word's literature review matrix (see Appendix A). The final column in the literature review matrix is set up to list the level of evidence for each article included in the analysis. Grading of the evidence was done using Melnyk and Fineout-Overholt's (2011) guide on hierarchy of evidence-based studies (see Appendix B). All articles that met the inclusion criteria were analyzed for the level and grade of evidence. I developed a PRISMA flowchart diagram (Appendix C) to show the article selection process and the number of articles in the final analysis.

Because this systematic literature review used only published articles, there was no human subject participation and no data collected from individuals or sites.

The findings of this systematic review will hopefully be published in nursing journals. Some of the journals that would be appropriate include *Journal of Nursing Education*, *Journal of Research in Nursing*, *American Association of Colleges of Nursing*, and *Journal of School of Nursing*. Some conferences that this information can be presented at would include Global Nursing Education Conference, World Congress on Nursing Education and Research, National Nurse Educator Summit, and Nursing Education Conference. Before this gets published or presented, a thorough review of all journals and conferences needs to be done to ensure that the one chosen is the best one.

## **Summary**

This project was based on current literature that was found in many different databases. DNP prepared nurses can help mitigate the shortage of nursing faculty.

Literature showed that DNP prepared nurses can have a role in academia to help educate and shape future nurses as well as help nurses wanting to further their education. The literature review helps to determine the appropriate role of the DNP in academia.

## Section 4: Findings and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

Nursing shortages affect all healthcare settings and all aspects of healthcare, in particular, patient care. Tyczkowski & Reilly (2017) stated that the nursing faculty shortage is a pressing issue to address and is due to aging faculty, retention issues, and increased need for more doctorally prepared nurses. Nurses are needed to educate new nurses; to provide leadership and mentorship in evidence-based practice, and to serve in administrative roles that require higher educational preparation (Hammatt & Nies, 2015). Many nursing academic programs have waitlists because they do not have adequate faculty to teach in the programs who can prepare not only undergraduate nurses but also master's and doctoral nurses. In 2014, 15,288 applicants were turned away from master's and doctoral programs due to faculty shortages (Tyczkowski & Reilly, 2017), and the volume of candidates for undergraduate and graduate nursing programs exceeded 64,000 in 2016 (AACN 2017).

The practice-focused question was:

PFQ: What are the roles of DNP prepared nurses in academia?

The purpose of this systematic review was to examine evidence from the literature that can be used in determining the role of DNP prepared nurses in academia. The meaningful gap in practice that this project addressed was the use of DNP nurses in academia to provide faculty who are prepared to teach future nurses at all levels of practice. This project may contribute to a potential decrease in the nursing faculty shortage and can in the long term help reduce the nursing shortage. This doctoral project

addressed the gap in practice by using current, published articles or other credible sources to support the idea that DNP prepared nurses can play a significant role in academia by supporting and educating nurses and helping to decrease the nurse and nursing faculty shortage.

Sources of evidence were found by searching CINAHL, PubMed, Walden Library, Cochrane library, Joanna Briggs Institute, and Medline. Specialty organizations and journals that I used included *American Journal of Nursing*, *Journal of Nursing Education*, *Nurse Educator*, *American Association of Colleges of Nursing*, and *National League of Nursing*. Sources were found by searching these key words or combination of these key words: *DNP nurses and nursing education*, *academia*, *DNP nurses and faculty*, *DNP nurses and teaching*, *DNP prepared and academia*, *DNP prepared and teaching*, and *academia and nurses*. The timeframe for sources ranged from 2005 through 2018. I conducted analysis by using the evidence that was collected and recorded in an organized way with Microsoft Word matrix and a PRISMA flowchart to show article selection process and final number of articles used. The Walden University IRB approval number for this systematic review was 03-06-19-0423607.

### **Findings and Implications**

The Joanna Briggs database returned 10 articles for DNP and teaching and 10 articles for academia and nurses. The other search terms returned no articles. Out of the total of 20 articles, none were useful in this project as they were not about DNP and its role in academia. Cochrane database had returned three articles for DNP prepared and

teaching and three for academia and nurses; however, these six articles were not usable for this project as they did not supply any information for the DNP role in academia.

Medline database supplied a total of 609 articles. Out of the 609 articles, 22 articles were usable; however, the 22 were narrowed down to nine due to duplicate articles from the different search terms noted above. CINAHL database supplied a total of 358 articles. Out of the 358 articles, there were 28 articles that were usable; however, this was narrowed down to 11 articles once the duplicates were taken out. The next database that was searched was PUBMED. This database returned a total of 31 articles with only 7 usable articles, and none were duplicates. This left a total of 27 articles between the databases searched using the keywords listed. Of the 27 articles, 13 were duplicates; leaving 14 usable articles once the duplicates were removed. This systematic review included all 14 ( $n = 14$ ) articles in the analysis section (see Appendix C).

After reviewing the 14 articles, the overall consensus was that the DNP role in academia is still evolving. Several common themes were identified over the 14 articles.

These themes are:

1. DNP's role in academia from deans' and directors' perspectives,
2. DNP role as teachers,
3. DNP programs preparation for faculty role, and
4. Faculty leaving due to aging and burnout.



## **Doctor of Nursing Practice Role in Academia from Deans' and Directors'**

### **Perspectives**

Deans and directors of nursing programs support the role of the DNP in higher nursing education. Tyczkowski and Reilly (2017) found that with the growing faculty shortage, DNPs need to be considered and encouraged to seek positions in academia. Hammatt and Nies (2017) proposed that DNP roles include practitioner, leader, and educator and found that some universities are embracing DNPs as educator. Agger et al. (2014) and Oermann et al. (2016) found that deans and directors of nursing programs thought that DNPs are prepared adequately for academia, while other deans and directors indicated additional educational classes are needed in the DNP curriculum to prepare DNPs for teaching in higher nursing education.

### **Doctor of Nursing Practice Role as Teachers**

One prevailing theme from the literature review pointed toward the DNP as a teacher. Trautman et al. (2018) found that DNPs have careers in education that contribute to academic teaching, course coordination, advising/mentoring, and participating on committees. Melnyk (2013) found that the DNP role as a teacher was vitally important in addressing healthcare problems while preparing the next generation for highly competent direct care of patients. Hammatt and Nies (2017) also stated that employing DNPs has advantages such as their practical knowledge of nursing, knowledge of evidence-based practice, and their past clinical experience. Hammatt and Nies (2017) stated that DNPs have a broader perspective of systems-based issues, which helps the nursing student with the rigors and challenges of nurses' leadership roles. Agger et al. (2014) and Oermann et

al. (2016) found that DNPs can teach in all programs except PhD, in classroom, online, clinical, or coordinating courses and advising students. Agger et al. (2014) also found that the main role of DNPs is to teach because of their clinical knowledge and real-world experience that is needed at all degree-offering nursing schools and programs. Oermann et al. (2016) found that DNPs teach at the graduate level and advise students. Udilis and Mancuso (2015) found that DNP graduates do plan on working as faculty, and 76% felt prepared for the academic role. Edwardson (2010) found that DNPs are good for clinical education.

### **Doctor of Nursing Practice Program Preparation for Faculty Role**

Another prevailing theme identified was the need for teaching courses in the DNP curriculum. These courses would include educational theory, testing, evaluation, curriculum development, and a capstone educational practicum. *The Essentials of Doctoral Education for Advanced Nursing Practice* contends that the focus of the DNP needs to be advanced specialty, not the process of teaching (AACN, 2006). AACN (2015) stated that DNP graduates are able to teach at the collegiate level as they have a terminal degree; however, they may need additional coursework for pedagogy and the educator role. Melnyk (2013) went further to state that DNP education does not prepare graduates for teaching any more than the PhD program. Fitzpatrick (2007) suggested that DNP prepared nurses were appropriate for teaching at basic and advanced levels. McNelis, Dreifuerst and Schwindt (2018) found that graduates from DNP programs may not be prepared to fulfill all aspects of the faculty role due to the lack of teaching essentials in the DNP program. Agger et al. (2014) noted that both doctoral degrees need

to have some educational classes in the curriculum. Chase and Pruitt (2006) found that DNP programs need to address preparation for faculty roles. Fang and Bednash (2017) found that DNP graduates are not confident in teaching informatics. Dreifuerst et al. (2016) found that majority of DNP graduates believed that their education prepared them well to teach in a nursing role. Dreifuerst et al. (2016) stated that doctoral programs should ensure that their graduates are prepared to be successful in all areas that comprise the faculty role.

### **Doctor of Nursing Practice Faculty Leave the Faculty Role**

Another theme identified was that DNPs who achieve faculty roles leave their academic faculty role for many reasons. Some leave the faculty role because the pay is not competitive with clinical positions while others leave due to reaching retirement age, lack of adequate preparation for the teaching role, burn out, or a negative perception of academia. Tyczkowski and Reilly (2017) found that in order to increase the number of DNP nurses entering academia, schools need to offer higher compensation, add a teaching competency to their educational preparation and enhance retention through mentoring. Oermann et al. (2016) found retaining faculty was difficult due to low salaries and workload. Oermann et al. also noted that deans and directors reported that geographical location and noncompetitive pay made it hard to recruit and retain doctorally prepared faculty. Fang and Bednash (2017) noted that faculty were leaving due to financial compensation and a negative perception of academia. Aquino et al. (2018) found that faculty were leaving due to age and burnout.

### **Summary**

The DNP role in general is still uncertain, especially in academia. There has been research that shows DNPs have a role in academia but at the same time state that there needs to be more education in the DNP curriculum. There are some studies that support DNP in academia and there are some that do not support DNP in academia. There is also the view that the DNP is for advanced practice registered nurses; if this is the case, then what about the nurses who go through a master's program in leadership, informatics or nursing education. This specific topic would need to have more research done to be able to specifically define DNP as advanced practice nurses. The answer to the question what is the DNP's role in academia can be safely answered by saying that DNPs can be in academia if they chose a program that supports the use of DNPs in academia.

### **Recommendations**

After performing this literature review, there are many recommendations that can be made. First, DNPs are useful in academia, as long as they chose a program that supports DNPs in academia. Recommendations for future research include a look at the master's in nursing education as a better route for DNPs who want to get into academia as that degree course educates nurses specifically to teach. The definition of DNP as advanced practice nurses needs to be reexamined and redefined so that nurses with a masters in informatics, education, or leadership who decide to complete a DNP program are also acknowledged as a DNP. Overall, more research is needed to be able to better define DNP.

### **Strengths and Limitations of the Project**

A strength of this DNP project was the knowledge gained throughout the process. Another strength of this literature review is in showing that DNPs are being looked at favorably for a role in the academic arena. Another strength is that it was found that deans and directors are embracing DNPs in the academia field. This project also brought to light some changes that might need to happen for DNPs to be effective teachers and that future research that is needed. A limitation of this project was the small number of articles ( $n = 14$ ) that could be used in the literature review. Another limitation was that the findings did not result in a final determination.

## Section 5: Dissemination Plan

### Introduction

The plan for dissemination of this work includes submission to ProQuest as a requirement of the Walden University Doctor of Nursing Practice program. ProQuest contains dissertations from many different universities and colleges. Submission to ProQuest will make this information available to other students who may be interested in the same topic or can add to or take this project one step further. Submission to local nursing universities and colleges would be appropriate to show administration that DNPs are a good choice for nursing faculty. Getting this information out to these places will help to decrease the current faculty shortage. Once that is completed and graduation has occurred, the next steps would be to choose the appropriate nursing journals. These journals would include *American Journal of Nursing*, *Journal of Nursing Education*, *Nurse Educator*, *American Association of Colleges of Nursing*, and *National League of Nursing*. Audiences that would benefit from the information provided in this systematic review would include nurses seeking a higher education, program directors of nursing schools, nursing school faculty, and nursing CEOs. Presenting at nursing symposia and conferences would be an effective strategy to disseminate this information as well. Nursing management and nursing schools would also be appropriate targets for this information. The first step after graduation will be to submit this review to *American Association of College of Nursing*, *Journal of Nursing Education*, and *Nurse Educator* for publication. I would also submit the abstract to DNP Conference and Nursing Education and Management Conference.

### **Analysis of Self**

Since the beginning of this DNP project, my research skills have been developed, and my ability to analyze the current literature has been refined. In this systematic review I was able to apply the methodology and principles I learned while matriculating through the Walden University DNP program. I pushed past my insecurities about the daunting task of completing this project. This process included hours of reading research articles, developing tables to organize the findings, grading the studies, and synthesizing the data to present in this project as well as working on scholarly voice and higher level of grammar and word choice. I understand the importance of rigorous review of research findings to determine their appropriateness for use in clinical practice. This experience will enhance my future efforts to appraise research studies and to become involved in more research studies and presentations. These valuable skills will assist me as I continue to teach at nursing colleges and universities, mentor nursing students, and interact with nursing colleagues.

### **Summary**

This doctoral project is an analysis and synthesis of current literature about the role of DNP prepared nurses within the academic setting. This systematic review can provide nurses and teaching facilities with information that will help to decrease the faculty shortage, which will in turn decrease the nursing shortage. It was found that DNPs are vitally important in academia. With the support of administrative leaders within schools of nursing, the DNP may be a viable option for filling the gap in the faculty

shortage. By publishing this review of the literature, the information may be used to raise awareness of the role of the DNP in the academic setting.



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## Appendix A: Data Analysis and Evaluation

Full Reference	Research Question(s)/ Hypotheses	Research Methodology	Conclusions	Grading the Evidence
Agger, C., Oermann, M. & Lynn, M. (2014). Hiring and incorporating Doctor of Nursing Practice-prepared nurse faculty into academic nursing programs. <i>Journal of Nursing Education</i> 53(8), 439-444.	How the availability of DNP-prepared faculty applicants has influenced hiring practices	Descriptive Design with semi structured interviewing	The main role of DNP-prepared faculty members is teaching. 50/50 on whether DNP education was accurate for teaching role. Only a few programs offered tenure for DNP and lastly, deans and directors are open to hiring DNP faculty.	Level VI
Aquino, E., Lee, Y., Spawn, N., and Bishop-Royse, J. (2018). The impact of burnout on a doctorate nursing faculty's intent to leave their academic position: A descriptive survey research design. <i>ScientDirect</i> 69, 35-40. Doi: 10.1016/j.nedt.2018.06.027	Why faculty leave academic position	Descriptive Survey research design	Need to create a supportive, and positive work environment to retain nursing faculty.	Level VI
Chase, S., & Pruitt, R. (2006). The practice doctorate: Innovation or disruption. <i>Journal of Nursing Education</i> 45(5), 155-160.	Does the DNP movement provide an innovation that solves a problem of complexity by providing a simpler solution to problems, or does it add increasing complexity and enhance the position of key stakeholders?	Critical reflection on published literature	We recommend abandoning the 2015 deadline for implementation of advanced practice nurse preparation with the DNP. The practice doctorate should remain an educational innovation whose worth can be evaluated.	Level VI
Dreifuerst, K. T., McNelis, A. M., Weaver, M. T., Broome, M. E., Draucker, C. B., & Fedko, A. S.	What factors influence the pursuit and completion of doctoral education	Mixed methods with quantitative findings.	Found that time, money and program selection is what faculty looked at when seeking a faculty position	Level III



<p>(2016). Exploring the pursuit of doctoral education by nurses seeking or intending to stay in faculty roles. <i>Journal of Professional Nursing: Official Journal of The American Association of Colleges of Nursing</i>, 32(3), 202–212</p>				
<p>Edwardson, S. (2010). Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Nursing Practice as complementary degrees. <i>Journal of Professional Nursing</i>. 26(3), 137-140</p>	<p>Will the DNP degree distract from the PhD degree?</p>	<p>Descriptive</p>	<p>PhD and DNP can support and work together to advance the creation and translation of knowledge into practice.</p>	<p>Level VI</p>
<p>Fang, D., &amp; Bednash, G. D. (2017). Identifying barriers and facilitators to future nurse faculty careers for DNP students. <i>Journal of Professional Nursing: Official Journal of The American Association of Colleges of Nursing</i>, 33(1), 56–67</p>	<p>What are the barriers and facilitators to academic careers for DNP students?</p>	<p>Cross- sectional study</p>	<p>Facilitators included interest in teaching and appreciation for impact on nursing and barriers were poor financial compensation and not confident in teaching informatics.</p>	<p>Level VI</p>
<p>Fitzpatrick JJ, &amp; Marecki M. (2007). Is the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) the appropriate doctoral degree for nurses?. Writing for the PRO position... Writing for the CON position. <i>The</i></p>	<p>Is the Doctor of Nursing Practice (DNP) the appropriate doctoral degree for nurses?</p>	<p>Expert Opinion</p>	<p>Yes, DNP is appropriate degree for nurses in teaching positions.</p>	<p>Level VII</p>

<i>American Journal of Maternal Child Nursing</i> , 32(3), 138–139.				
Hammatt, J. & Nies, M. (2015). DNP's: What can we expect? <i>Nurse Leader</i> , 64-67. <a href="http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.mnl.2015.03.014">http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.mnl.2015.03.014</a>	What roles can the DNP fill?	Descriptive	DNP-prepared nurse shows the strengths needed to meet the challenges of practitioner, leader, and educator.	Level VI
McNelis, A. M., Dreifuerst, K. T., & Schwindt, R. (2018). Doctoral education and preparation for nursing faculty roles. <i>Nurse Educator</i> .	Are doctoral programs have adequate preparedness for faculty roles?	Qualitative Descriptive	PhD and DNP programs should include curricula in teaching.	Level V
Melnyk B.M. (2013). Distinguishing the preparation and roles of Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Nursing practice graduates: National implications for academic curricula and health care systems. <i>Journal of Nursing Education</i> , 52, 442 – 448.	How can DNPs and PhDs improve quality of healthcare and what various roles can they fulfill.	Descriptive	PhD and DNP graduates are equally important in preparing the next generation of nurses.	Level VI
Oermann, M., Lynn, M., & Agger, C. (2016). Hiring intentions of directors of nursing programs related to DNP- and PhD-Prepared faculty and roles of faculty. <i>Journal of Professional Nursing</i> 32(3), 173-179.	What are the intentions of deans and directors in hiring DNP and PhD prepared faculty	Qualitative	BSN and higher degree program intend on hiring more PhD then DNP, however they anticipate on hiring more DNP then before. Location and pay were reasons why they had difficulty before in hiring DNP. PhD and DNP help similar roles as faculty.	Level V

Trautman, D., Idzik, S., Hammersla, M., and Rosseter, R. (2018). Advancing Scholarship through translational research: The role of the PhD and DNP prepared nurses. <i>Online Journal of issues in Nursing, 23</i> (2)	What are the roles of PhD and DNP prepared nurses?	Descriptive	PhD and DNP share in the scholarship of teaching in the academic environment and often find collaborative and synergistic roles in the practice and research environments.	Level VI
Tyczkowski, B. & Reilly, J. (2017). DNP-Prepared Nurse Leaders. <i>JONA 47</i> (7/8), 359-360	How can we increase the number of DNP-prepared nurses entering academia?	Descriptive	To encourage more DNP-prepared nurse leaders to select a career in academic, we need to raise salaries, provide continued practice opportunities, add a teaching competency to their educational preparation, and enhance retention through mentoring and sustained collaborative efforts.	Level VI
Udlis, K & Mancuso, J. (2015). Perceptions of the role of the Doctor of Nursing Practice-Prepared nurse: Clarity or confusion. <i>Journal of Professional Nursing 31</i> (4), 274-283.	How nurses perceive the role of the DNP-prepared nurse	Descriptive, cross-sectional design	It is clear that role ambiguity was prevalent among the sample of nurses surveyed with respect to the DNP-prepared nurse.	Level VI

### Reference

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## Appendix B: Level of Evidence Hierarchy

*Level of Evidence Pyramid Hierarchy*

Level	Description of evidence
I	Systematic review and meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials
II	One or more randomized controlled trials
III	Controlled trial (no randomization)
IV	Case-control or cohort study
V	Systematic review of descriptive and qualitative studies
VI	Single descriptive or qualitative
VII	Expert opinion

*Note.* Melnyk and Fineout-Overholt (2011) designed this level of evidence hierarchy.

## Appendix C: PRISMA Chart

