Application of the ACEStar Model and Essential Competencies in a DNP Program
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**Problem:** The doctorate of nursing practice (DNP) is designed to prepare nurse leaders and innovators for evidence based practice (EBP); however few data are available supporting how EBP is taught and how EBP competency is measured in DNP programs.

**Evidence:** Previous data have demonstrated the ACEStar Model© as an effective framework for teaching EBP at the undergraduate level, and content and construct validity have been reported related to Essential Competencies for EBP in Nursing.

**Strategy/Practice Change:** The purpose of this study is to demonstrate the effect of using the ACEStar Model© as the framework for teaching an evidence course and the doctoral level essential EBP competencies as an outcome measure of learning EBP in a DNP program.

**Procedure:** An evidence course was developed for a new DNP program based on the ACEStar Model©. The doctoral level essential competencies were formatted into a 31-item, on-line self-rated measure of EBP competency using a 0 – 4 rating scale reflecting ‘No Competence’ to ‘Expert Competence’. Five subscales (star-points) were scored as the average of the responses within each subscale; the total score was obtained by summing subscale scores (thereby converting ordinal into interval data). Competency was measured before and after the first-semester evidence course.

**Evaluation:** Data were collected August 2010 – January 2011. Descriptive statistics, Repeated ANOVA, and internal consistency reliability testing were utilized.

**Results:** Twenty DNP students comprised the initial cohort in our program (47.5 ± 8.20 years of age, 80% female, 60/40% in the Advanced Practice and Nurse Educator tracks, respectively). Following the evidence course, significant improvement in the total score and all subscale scores except Evaluation was demonstrated (p ≤ .001). Internal consistency reliability was demonstrated for the subscales and total score (.97/.94 pre/post).

**Lessons Learned/Recommendations:** The ACEStar Model© provided an effective framework for our evidence course to improve EBP competency. Ongoing, end-or-semester measurements may be helpful in demonstrating progression in doctoral level EBP competencies; online surveying facilitated data collection.

**Bibliography**


Stevens, K. R. (2005, 2009) Essential Competencies for Evidence-Based Practice in Nursing. 1st and 2nd Ed. Academic Center for Evidence-Based Practice: The University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.