Impact

Implementation

Project Plan

Assessment

Problem
Identification

SECTION I

The Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree

Setting the Stage for the Doctor of Nursing Practice Project

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to help the student recognize the value of doctoral education and the practice doctorate and understand the significance of the doctor of nursing practice (DNP) project as a demonstration of practice (clinical) scholarship within complex health systems. This will be accomplished by introducing the student to concepts that will be discussed throughout this text and by highlighting a framework that students can use to complete the DNP project, which reflects attainment of *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (AACN, 2021).

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

After completing the chapter, the learner will be able to:

1. Describe the DNP-prepared practice scholar.
2. Understand implications of health system leadership as system citizens.
3. Conceptualize the evolutionary nature of the DNP project.
4. Discern the purpose of the DNP project.

▶ Taking the Journey

It is well known that the nation's healthcare needs are becoming more complex, the cost of health care is increasing, and the quality of health care is being questioned, especially in light of growing health inequities in our population. Many Americans are concerned about how these issues will be resolved. Recognizing these challenges, the Institute of Medicine [IOM] published *Crossing the Quality Chasm* (2001), followed by *Health Professions Education: A Bridge to Quality* (2003) and the *Future of Nursing* (2011), calling for fundamental change in healthcare delivery and health professions education.

In many ways, the DNP degree was designed to address the inadequacies and inequities of the current healthcare delivery system. The DNP-prepared nurse possesses *advanced competencies* for increasingly complex clinical, faculty, and leadership roles; enhanced *knowledge* to improve nursing practice and patient outcomes; and enhanced *leadership* skills to strengthen practice and healthcare delivery.

The original *Essentials for Doctoral Education* (AACN, 2006) domains reflect the interprofessional competencies identified in the IOM's 2003 report on health professions' education. Similarly, *The Essentials* include curricular content related to systems-based influences on individual and population well-being, healthcare delivery, and health outcomes addressed in the IOM reports (2001, 2003, 2011). The addition of a terminal practice degree in nursing also supports the goal set in the 2011 *Future of Nursing* report to double the number of doctoral-prepared nurses within the decade. This educational trend is consistent with other health professions now requiring practice doctorates for evolving roles in complex health systems.

Applying a systems thinking mindset and systems-based practice principles to optimize and innovate health care in diverse settings are defining characteristics of DNP practice and important dimensions of systems citizenship, a term coined by organizational leadership expert Peter Senge (2006). Systems citizens understand how systems function, identify interdependencies within systems, and build collaborative partnerships to achieve desired outcomes (Gonzalo et al., 2022).

DNP-prepared nurses have been called to lead and collaborate with other healthcare practitioners to transform health care. This was substantiated by the National Academies of Science (2021) (formerly the IOM) in the recently released *The Future of Nursing 2020–2030* report that reinforced prior recommendations and reiterated nurses' central role in addressing health inequities.

It should be no surprise, then, that the decision to enter a DNP program marks the beginning of what will become a *transformative experience* for many students. The program is both challenging and rewarding. Through the process of personal development, one begins to recognize the need to view the world through multiple lenses, to continue the quest for new nursing knowledge, to apply that knowledge in a practice setting in a meaningful way, and to collaborate with other healthcare practitioners to meet the ever increasing and complex healthcare needs of the nation. It is a journey where students travel conceptually from one place in their clinical practice to a new place in practice. The insight gleaned through the process gives students a new frame of reference to continue to build a more comprehensive understanding of nursing praxis, which will ultimately benefit nursing as a profession and society as a whole.

> The decision to enter a DNP program marks the beginning of what will become a *transformative* experience for many students.

It is important to recognize that the DNP degree continues to evolve and that *all DNP-prepared nurses need to influence the outcome*. As the degree continues to mature, the value-added impact of the DNP-prepared nurse on healthcare delivery and health outcomes will be recognized. Therefore, it is essential that DNP

students demonstrate that they are prepared for doctoral nursing practice through knowledge synthesis, skill refinement, and the completion of the DNP project. This is a critical point because completion of the DNP degree is only the beginning; continued practice scholarship is expected from all nurses prepared at the doctorate level. And the impact of this work will transform health care by addressing policy concerns, costs associated with healthcare delivery, the quality of care, as well as improving the work–life balance of healthcare clinicians and staff. As systems citizens, DNP-prepared nurses (clinical scholars) will need to continue to identify the gaps between the current and the desired state of practice and implement evidence-based solutions. Through these efforts, society will continue to see the impact of practice scholarship and the associated benefit of the practice doctorate.

▶ Health Systems Science: The Path to Systems Citizenship for DNP-Prepared Practice Scholars

The introduction of systems-based practice competencies to address care gaps and improve health outcomes has been a critical development in advanced nursing education. The development of the DNP Project discussed throughout this book demonstrates the knowledge and skill of DNP-prepared nurses to design high-impact systems and policy innovations that will transform health care. This cumulative scholarly work also demonstrates an emerging professional identity as a systems citizen that ". . . necessitates caring for and addressing insufficiencies in the system as obligatory aspects of the professional role" (Gonzalo & Ogrinc, 2019, p. 1429).

The emergence of systems-related curricula to better prepare healthcare providers and practice leaders for expanded professional roles in complex health systems is occurring in other health professions as well. This educational paradigm shift will provide exciting opportunities for novel interprofessional approaches to improve health care (Gonzalo et al., 2017). In 2013, the American Medical Association introduced Health Systems Science (HSS) as the "third pillar" of medical education to complement traditional undergraduate medical education's basic and clinical science pillars as part of the Accelerating Change in Medical Education Consortium (Skochelak et al., 2021). Health Systems Science is "the study of how care is delivered, how healthcare professionals work together to deliver that care, and how the health system can improve patient care and health care delivery" (Gonzalo et al., 2021, p. 6).

This integrated curriculum consists of three types of curricular domains: core functional, foundational, and linking. *Core functional curricular domains* consist of specific HSS content areas such as population health, health system improvement, and clinical informatics. *Foundational curricular domains* include HSS content areas that are higher-order concepts that span multiple courses in health professions' programs of study. Examples of foundational domain content includes, teaming, leadership, and advocacy. Finally, systems thinking, the *linking curricular domain,* provides the lens or mental model that connects specific HSS concepts (internal linking) with all other coursework including specialty nursing and foundational graduate courses (external linking) (Gonzalo et al., 2021).

The HSS curriculum framework nicely aligns with the original DNP Essential domains as well as the new *AACN Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education* (2021) (see Chapter 2, Defining the Doctor of Nursing Practice: Historical and Current Trends, Table 2-2), offering a common framework to ". . . catalyze [health professions'] education as well as health care delivery transformation" (Gonzalo et al., 2020, p. 1363). It is also noteworthy that the concepts within these common HSS curriculum domains address the underappreciated influences that are critically important to optimal patient care.

▶ The DNP Project

Soon after students begin the doctoral program, they will start to work on the final program deliverable: the DNP project. Each doctoral-level course provides an opportunity for students to gain new knowledge that will help them complete the project. Through this journey, students may refine original project ideas, or students may end up going in an entirely new direction. Be assured that this is part of the process. In the end, the DNP project will be a carefully selected project that not only meets program requirements, but also fulfills the student's professional goals and the organization's goals (where the project is implemented), as well as contributes to the overall goals of the DNP-prepared nurse as a healthcare professional: to *positively influence health care now and in the future.*

Health Systems Science (HSS) is "the study of how care is delivered, how healthcare professionals work together to deliver that care, and how the health system can improve patient care and health care delivery" (Gonzalo et al., 2021, p. 6).

As DNP-prepared nurses, the authors have completed multiple scholarly projects, have provided consultation services for many DNP programs across the country, and have conducted research to give us insight and perspective on the DNP-prepared nurse's contribution to health care. The authors want to share their experience and personal insights regarding the topic of the DNP project. Our hopes are to help future DNP students on their journey, to be a guide on the side that lends a helping hand when needed. The goal of this text is to give the student a frame of reference when embarking on the DNP project. However, because there are virtually limitless DNP project ideas being developed, it is impossible to speak to the needs of each of these specifically. Therefore, this text was designed to include the potential requirements for the most comprehensive project even though some DNP projects may not require such detail. This is *not meant to suggest that all projects should mirror the examples* provided; rather, this text is intended to be a reference or a framework that allows students to choose items that will help inform their project

and challenges students to consider new perspectives that foster creativity and the development of innovative ideas. At the same time, it is our hope that doctoral nursing educators, team members, and other healthcare professionals interfacing with DNP students find this text helpful when guiding DNP students through the scholarly project process.

Developing the DNP project is not a linear process; it is created through a series of explorations that result in a comprehensive, well-thought-out project plan. As such, students should recognize that although the topics in this text are presented in a stepwise framework to help them through the process, some of the work may occur simultaneously because of the evolutionary nature of the project.

Many different DNP programs are available across the United States. All of the programs meet the needs of the community they serve; however, they may accomplish this via different methods. As a result, *program structures will vary*; some may include a formal DNP project team, while others may use a completely different approach. For example, some universities may use a model that requires one faculty advisor and one faculty member from the university who serves as a team member, while others may include one faculty advisor and one representative from the community. The same is true regarding the final program deliverable requirements. In an attempt to better understand the characteristics of these programs, the authors have collaborated with many individuals either providing DNP education in programs throughout the United States or informing DNP education, such as the American Association of Colleges of Nursing (AACN), to better understand the needs of DNP students, faculty, and others working with students to complete the DNP project. We have learned that DNP education and the recommended requirements of DNP projects and teams are continuing to evolve (see Chapter 2, Defining the Doctor of Nursing Practice: Historical and Current Trends). Recognizing this, the authors sought to meet the various scholarly requirement needs of these programs by providing a wide variety of options and perspectives for students to consider and reference where applicable. While there are many examples, templates, and other formats provided as tools for the journey, the intent is to give students options, not be directive.

> Developing the DNP project is not a linear process; it is created through a series of explorations that result in a comprehensive, well-thought-out project plan.

▶ The Purpose of the DNP Project

A debate has been ongoing for many years regarding what one should consider as *scholarship*, especially in academe. Many learned individuals have weighed in on this debate over the years, including Ernest L. Boyer, a well-known educator who at one point served as the U.S. Commissioner on Education. In 1990, Boyer, then president of the Carnegie Foundation for Advancement of Teaching, suggested that for "America's colleges and universities to remain vital a new vision of scholarship

> A *scholar* is a learned person, who is specialized in an area of knowledge ("Scholar," 2016).

> The DNP project plays a very important role in doctoral education; it affords the DNP student an opportunity to launch into scholarly practice.

is required" (Boyer, 1990, p. 13). It is clear that the scholarship debate began long before the DNP degree; however, since the introduction of this degree, the discussion has shifted to include *practice scholarship*.

In an effort to contribute to the richness of this dialogue, a discussion regarding the evolving scholarship of practice is provided in Chapter 3, Scholarship in Practice.

For the purposes of introduction to the DNP project, it is important to recognize, from a very literal sense, that the term *scholar* is defined as a learned person, who is specialized in an area of knowledge ("Scholar," 2016). Taking this definition and applying it to the DNP project helps one recognize that this project provides the student with a vehicle through which one can demonstrate advanced knowledge in a particular area. This is in alignment with AACN, which believes that the final DNP project should demonstrate "synthesis of the student's work" and that it should lay the groundwork for future scholarship (AACN, 2006, p. 20). Certainly, the project should demonstrate the student's achievement of the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's (2021) *The Essentials: Core Competencies for Professional Nursing Education*, but more specifically, the *Advanced-Level Nursing Education Competencies*. A detailed discussion regarding these competencies and current trends in DNP education is provided in Chapter 2.

It should be clear that the DNP project is many things: a required program deliverable, the demonstration of doctoral competencies, and a means to achieve professional goals as well as the goals of the organization where the project is implemented. The importance of the impact of this work cannot be overstated. The DNP project is one mechanism for advanced practice nurses to contribute to the goals of the National Academies of Science (2021), *The Future of Nursing 2020–2030 report*, the Institute of Medicine (2001) *Six Aims for Healthcare Improvement*, the goals for Healthy People 2030, and finally, demonstrate the Quality and Safety Education in Nursing (QSEN) knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSAs) that nurses must possess to deliver safe, effective care (Cronenwett et al., 2007). But to realize this impact, DNP students must be focused on delivering high-quality, relevant projects that can be sustained.

In addition, it is expected that the project is only the beginning of many future scholarly contributions by the DNP-prepared nurse that lead to improvement in health care and add to nursing knowledge. Therefore, the DNP project plays a very important role in doctoral education; it affords the DNP student an opportunity to *launch into scholarly practice*. The DNP-prepared nurse will have many opportunities

to transcend current barriers and positively impact health care in the United States as we know it today—to build a bridge between research and practice, as well as between theory and practice. These are indeed exciting times!

In many ways, the creation of this text is an example of DNP scholarly work. The authors collaborated with thought leaders in the field, demonstrating the skills attained in *Domain 6: Interprofessional Partnerships.* Then, using the skills garnered in *Domain 1: Knowledge for Nursing Practice,* the authors reviewed the current literature and resources available for students on this topic. The authors also collaborated with other practice experts across the United States, considered their personal experiences as DNP-prepared nurses, and determined that a resource designated specifically for the completion of the DNP project would be a useful resource for DNP students, DNP faculty, and members of healthcare organizations.

In essence, the authors formed a *scholarship team* and worked together to meet the perceived needs of DNP students in programs throughout the country to provide the final deliverable, which correlates with *Domain 4: Scholarship for the Nursing Discipline*.

▶ Chapters at a Glance

The reader will note the text begins with an overview of the DNP degree, the historical influences, and an introduction to practice scholarship. The remaining chapters align with the project development process framework: Problem identification, assessment, project plan, implementation, and concluding with impact (see **Figure 1-1**).

The AACN (2021) *Essentials for Advanced-Level Nursing Education* are referenced in each chapter where they apply to the chapter discussion. As mentioned in the preface, the student will also note that significant points of the discussion
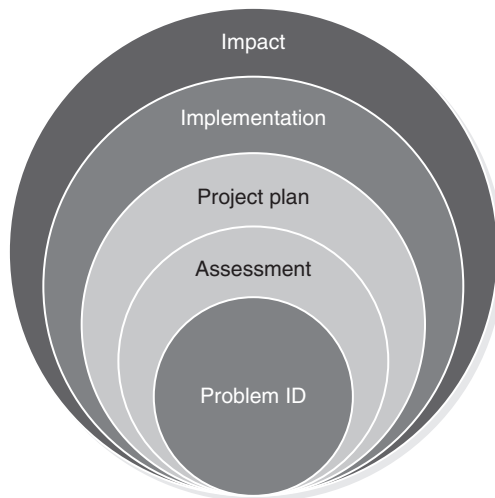
Figure 1-1 *The Doctor of Nursing Practice Project Framework*

are highlighted throughout the chapter, and *key messages* are reiterated at the end of each chapter. To facilitate learning and to help move the student along in the development of the DNP project, each chapter begins with learning objectives and concludes with an action plan and *helpful resources* (where applicable). Finally, a dedicated toolbox is available online that includes tools and templates to support the DNP project process.

Section I: The Doctor of Nursing Practice Degree

Every good framework begins with a solid foundation. To that end, the focus of the first section of this text is providing an overview of the DNP degree that includes the impetus to the degree, the purpose of the degree, historical and current trends affecting DNP education, as well as defining the purpose of the DNP project and the current view of potential projects. The student is reminded that both the practice- and research-based doctorate will need to collaborate to impact nursing and health care and that the collaboration between the two doctoral levels of preparation will determine the future of nursing and its impact on health care.

The overall goal of this section is to help the student develop an understanding of the many forms of scholarship as it relates to the practice doctorate, to conceptualize the types of projects that can be and are being considered by DNP students in programs across the United States, to examine potential topics of interest in relation to the appropriate level of scholarship, and to recognize the ultimate significance of the DNP project—to positively impact health outcomes and healthcare delivery, which in turn *validates the effectiveness of the DNP-prepared nurse*. To this last point, a recurring theme threaded throughout this new edition relates to the *impact* that DNP students and DNP-prepared nurses are making in their efforts to improve healthcare delivery and health care in the United States.

Section II: The DNP Project

Section II is devoted to guiding the reader through the DNP project process. Beginning with Chapter 4, Population Health and Healthcare Policy, and continuing in Chapter 5, The Phenomenon of Interest: Leading to Problem Identification, the complex nature of nursing practice is discussed, as well as how practice provides many opportunities to explore nursing phenomena. With the focus on problem identification (see **Figure 1-2**), students are introduced to a variety of strategies to help them select a phenomenon of interest and to explore the topic comprehensively.

The value of identifying a project that will lead to an improvement in clinical practice is stressed. Understanding this value is determined through a comprehensive assessment (see **Figure 1-3**). In Chapter 6, the DNP student is introduced to elements of a scholarly project that need to be considered early in the development phase, including conducting a literature search, writing a literature review to support the value and/or the need to address the phenomenon of interest, performing an organizational assessment, considering system-level issues that contribute to or create healthcare delivery problems, formulating a problem statement, defining the project goal and project scope, developing a project framework, and project type. During this process the student will use business acumen, consider a financial analysis and the implications, as well as the use of data to validate the problem. Tools are included at the end of the chapter to help the student conduct the organizational assessment, complete a literature search and review, and help guide the student in the conceptualization of the project plan through the use of the project plan template.

Figure 1-2 *Problem Identification*
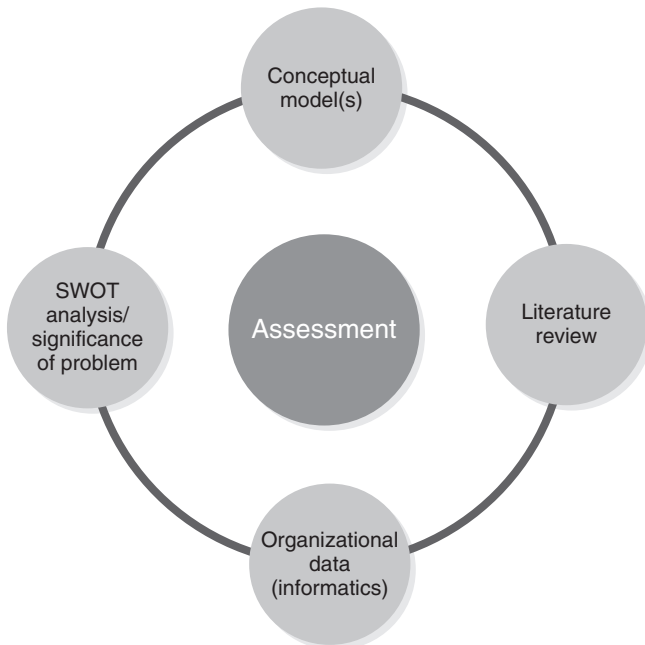
Figure 1-3 *Assessment*
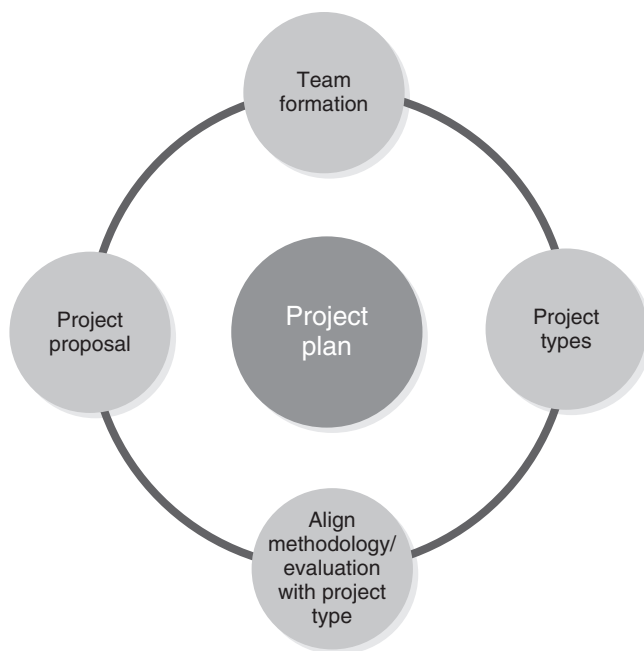
Figure 1-4 *Project Plan*

The project plan template provided as an example is fairly detailed to capture the elements needed in a complex or comprehensive project. However, the student is reminded that *all the elements presented may not be applicable to every potential project.*

The focus of the next three chapters guides the students through key aspects to include in the project plan (see **Figure 1-4**). In Chapter 7, Aligning Design, Method, and Evaluation with the Clinical Question, identifying the appropriate approach to obtain data and the methods used to work with the data received are explained. A more specific description is offered for program development and evaluation projects, as well as an expansion of project types to include health policy–related projects.

Since nationally, nurses are being called to actively collaborate within interprofessional teams to improve quality, cost-effective, and efficient care and improve outcomes (IOM, 2003), another focus of this section is to help the student understand that (1) the DNP project provides one with an opportunity to attain and refine the competencies needed for collaborative team participation and leadership; (2) the DNP student will need additional resources to assist in assessing, planning, implementing, and evaluating the DNP project; and (3) this is best achieved through collaboration. In Chapter 8, The DNP Project Team: Preparing for Project Implementation, the student is guided through these and other processes that influence the development and implementation of the DNP individual or group project by the faculty mentor and/or project team. The composition and roles of the project team, including the faculty mentor and other members, are reviewed. This information is important because project team dynamics, including making the most of team meetings and resources to form a cohesive and collegial team that

will work together, is vital to the student's success in completing the DNP project. Further, the point is made that interprofessional, collaborative teams are needed to transform healthcare delivery. A broad overview of points to consider when preparing for project implementation is provided, such as taking into consideration the client and personnel, monitoring requirements, problem-solving/troubleshooting demands, the need to communicate with key stakeholders, and the characteristics and skill set of effective leaders. Samples of a variety of tools are provided for the student to use throughout the DNP project development and implementation cycle to help ensure a successful outcome. Further, the value of the practicum is stressed in this section to help the student recognize (1) how the experience will support the development of DNP competencies and professional scholarly growth and (2) the potential to use the practicum in preparation for and implementation of the DNP project. The benefit of academic practice partnerships is introduced as an effective practicum mechanism to enhance learning for the DNP student and to assist organizations in reaching their strategic goals.

In Chapter 9, The Proposal, there is a comprehensive discussion regarding how the DNP project proposal represents the student's intellectual ability, knowledge in the subject area, and contributions to nursing as a profession. To help the student with the proposal writing process, information is provided to (1) help students recognize early in the process when they may need some additional writing support, (2) introduce the student to the components included in a sample project proposal, and (3) provide a reference for writing the DNP project proposal. The chapter concludes with considerations for human subject approval and submitting for grant support.

This section concludes with a discussion on project implementation, stakeholder collaboration via practice partnerships, and project evaluation (see **Figure 1-5**). In Chapter 10, Leading Implementation Through Collaboration, the
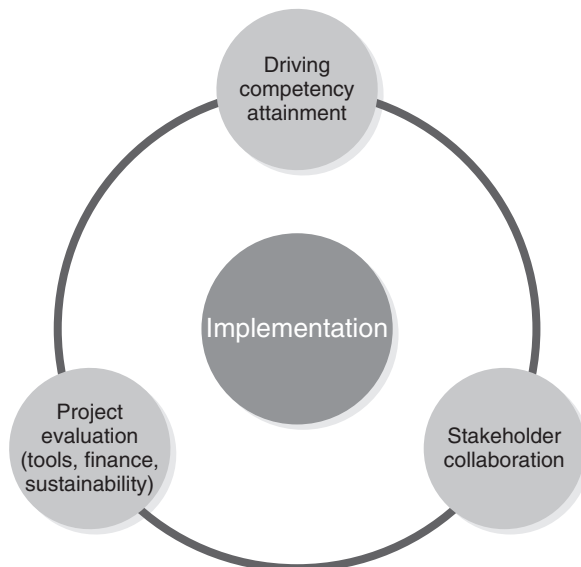
**Figure 1-5** Project Implementation

authors expand on how effective collaboration is needed to ensure successful implementation and how these concepts align with the new AACN (2021) Essential Competencies. For example, the implementation phase is an opportunity for the DNP student to develop competencies related to collaboration, quality, safety, interprofessional partnerships, and personal and professional leadership that contribute to a successful project. As noted throughout many of the chapters, exemplars are included to illustrate key concepts. Finally, project management, process improvement, and communication tools are available at the end of the chapter to facilitate project implementation and communication with stakeholders.

Then in Chapter 11, Driving the Practicum to Attain Competency and Leverage Impact through the DNP Project, the authors discuss how the practicum is used as a unique opportunity to plan field experiences that support the development of the advanced nursing competencies and professional scholarly growth. The authors also revised the widely used DNP Student Competency Assessment Tool to align with the *Essentials for Advanced-Level Nursing Education* (AACN, 2021).

A new chapter focusing on evaluation methods based on project type rounds out this section. Chapter 12, Evaluating the Doctor of Nursing Practice Project, complements the content in Chapter 7. Topics include determining process and outcomes measures, selecting measures and measurement tools, data collection considerations, the analysis plan (e.g., inferential/descriptive statistics; content and/or thematic analysis), and writing and displaying results.

Section III: Doctor of Nursing Practice Outcomes

The last section of this text, Section III, concludes by reaffirming the importance of the DNP project with a focus on impact, and the need to disseminate the results (see **Figure 1-6**). In Chapter 13, From Data to Knowledge: Disseminating the
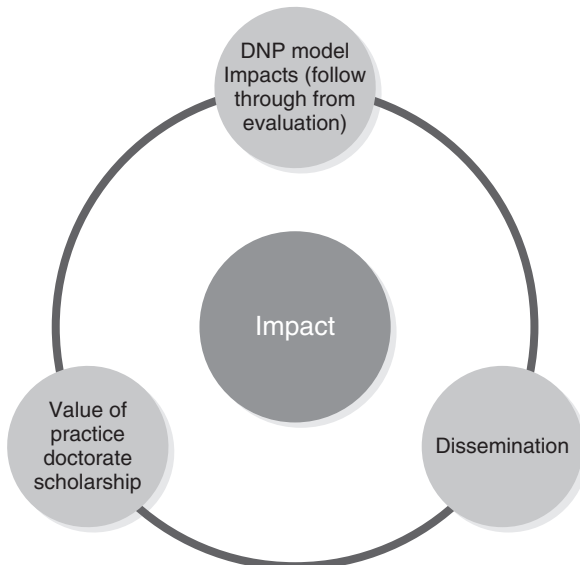
Figure 1-6 *Impact*

Results, various formats for disseminating the results are reviewed, such as public presentation, a defense of the project, a written manuscript for the university, and a manuscript submission to a scholarly journal. To this point, valuable insight is offered on how to successfully submit a manuscript for publication. The importance of communicating and disseminating the results of the DNP project is stressed not only because it may be a required program deliverable, but also because of the knowledge translation that occurs, benefiting both nursing as a profession and, even more broadly, the health of our nation. The student is reminded that the project is a product of DNP education that reflects the attainment of knowledge and skills that launches the DNP graduate into scholarly practice. The point is made, however, that it is important to recognize the need to evaluate the outcomes of this doctoral degree in nursing for effectiveness in accomplishing the goals of improving the nursing professions and health care, and meeting societal needs. Recognizing that this will be an important focus for the DNP-prepared nurse, in Chapter 14, The Value and Impact of Practice Doctorate Scholarship, an evaluation strategy is proposed using a new framework based on the Actualized DNP Model (Burson, Moran, & Conrad, 2016). The concept of practice scholarship impact is explored highlighting the research of a global scholarship team. The authors discuss global impact, the value of a scholarship team, mentoring, and the impact of the DNP-prepared nurse. This chapter concludes with an exemplar that illustrates integration of advanced-level nursing competencies of an international nursing leader with global value and impact.

Finally, in many of the chapters, there is an excerpt from the perspective of the DNP student regarding the topic of discussion in the specific chapter. For instance, in Chapter 5, The Phenomenon of Interest: Leading to Problem Identification, a student shares her experience of narrowing the topic related to her clinical expertise, the societal need, data from the organization, and the evidence in the literature. There are additional DNP student project exemplars that highlight a variety of frameworks available at the end of the eBook.

These examples are included to showcase aspects of the DNP project, to show the potential for the DNP project as a program deliverable, to provide evidence of healthcare transformation, and to illustrate the *impact* of the practice doctorate in nursing. In addition, sustainable projects become the catalyst for ongoing practice change far beyond the original project. Although it is evident that these projects certainly contribute to the health of individual populations, as a whole, they demonstrate that nurses prepared at the doctorate level provide more than protection, promotion, and optimization of health and abilities; these nurses facilitate healing and wellness through human connection. As a result of these efforts, society is beginning to see the impact of practice scholarship and the associated benefit of the practice doctorate.

DNP-prepared nurses are *demonstrating* their value to society through practice scholarship that improves healthcare outcomes.

Summary

The journey to the DNP degree may still be via a winding and rugged road; however, given the potential for DNP graduates to improve healthcare outcomes and to positively impact the nursing profession, these authors hope that more and more of our nursing colleagues recognize the value of doctoral education and join us on the journey. For the current DNP student, our hopes are that this text will provide a broad view of the DNP project and shed light on the DNP project journey.

Finally, where healthcare reform is concerned, it is evident that the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (2021) has recognized nurses as valuable players in this process. The physical, emotional, financial, and mental health toll humans experienced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic brings this point into clear focus. DNP-prepared nurses are equipped with a unique skill set to respond to these and other healthcare challenges and crises with the care and compassion that is needed for all humankind. Therefore, it is time for nurses, especially DNP-prepared nurses, to see health care as something we shape—DNPs are called to lead and manage collaborative efforts with other healthcare practitioners to improve health care.

Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Key Messages

- The DNP degree emerged as a response to current healthcare delivery challenges, combining advanced nursing and health system competencies needed for complex healthcare environments.
- The decision to enter a DNP program marks the beginning of what will become a transformative experience for many students.
- Developing the DNP project is not a linear process; it is created through a series of explorations that result in a comprehensive, well-thought-out project plan.
- The DNP project is a required program deliverable that demonstrates achievement of doctoral competencies and advanced knowledge in a particular area.
- The DNP project is a means to achieve professional goals and marks the beginning of many future scholarly contributions.
- The impact from this work will transform health care by addressing policy concerns, costs associated with healthcare delivery, and the quality of care.

Action Plan—Next Steps

1. Consider the value of the DNP project.
2. Open the mind to a variety of potential project topics.
3. Take advantage of learning opportunities.
4. Enjoy the journey!

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