

From Theory to Practice: Utilizing Integrative Seminars to Provide Foundational and Application Bookends to the Master of Public Administration Program of Study

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Abstract

This paper will describe and discuss the benefits of a unique approach of one U.S. Master of Public Administration (MPA) program that employs integrative seminars at both the start and end of the program of study. The program in question has designed its curriculum to begin with an integrative *theory* seminar; continue through a set of competency building core courses, electives, and internship experiences; and conclude with an integrative *practice* seminar. By design, the two integrative seminars act as bookends for the program of study that move students from theory into practice. The paper will: explore the importance of theory in a professional degree program; describe and explain both integrative seminars' purpose, design, and pedagogy as it relates to the core NASPAA competencies; and then offer discussion of the value fostered by the synthesis-analysis-synthesis structure.