



Short Communication

Involvement in teaching after completion of a teaching and learning curriculum

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Abstract

Introduction: A school-based teaching and learning curriculum (TLC) program began in 2009 to expose participants to careers in academia and develop participant's teaching abilities.

Objective: To assess participants' perceptions of the TLC program and how it impacted their positions one to four years after completion of the program.

Methods: A 25-item survey containing quantitative and qualitative assessments was sent to all previous participants of the program. A total of four contact attempts were made.

Results: A response rate of 77.2% was achieved. Of the respondents, 93% agreed or strongly agreed that the program was beneficial to their current position, and 92% agreed or strongly agreed that the program enhanced their teaching skills. The most valuable aspect of the program reported was the one-on-one mentoring from faculty.

Conclusions: Overall participants perceived the TLC program to be beneficial to their involvement in teaching and in obtaining teaching positions after completion of the program.

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Introduction

Many pharmacists incorporate teaching as part of their professional positions. Regardless of the area in which they practice, pharmacists frequently educate health care providers and patients. They may also lead continuing education programs or precept students as part of their responsibilities.

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teaching and learning curriculum (TLC) programs, previously called residency teaching certificate programs, were developed to help pharmacists become better educators.

Historically, pharmacists have not been trained as educators. The Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE) standards and the Center for the Advancement of Pharmacy Education (CAPE) outcomes do not explicitly require pharmacy students to receive instruction in teaching while in school.^{1,2} However, pharmacy school faculty and teaching assistants (TAs) need to be competent educators able to effectively deliver educational content to students according to Standards 18 and 19 in the ACPE 2016 standards.¹ Graduates hoping to obtain an academic position often seek additional training to gain teaching experience.

The lack of pharmacy teaching education prompted the creation of teaching certificate programs and TLC programs for pharmacy residents.

One of the first documented pharmacy teaching certificate programs was at the University of Kentucky in 1999.³ This program prepared pharmacy residents to be educators.³ Since then, residencies and post-graduate programs that incorporate education experiences have increased in popularity. The exact number of teaching certificate programs is unknown. However, a 2010 report showed 27% of responding pharmacy residency programs had a teaching certificate program.⁴ An online survey-based study conducted in 2007 by McNatty et al.⁵ evaluated 455 pharmacists that participated in residency programs between 2003 and 2006 to see if their teaching responsibilities had any effect on their career choice. The results showed former pharmacy residents who had teaching experience during their training were more likely to become faculty members.⁵

A new pathway for creating post-graduate training specifically for academic practice faculty members needs to be developed.⁶ While no national standards for post-graduate teaching programs currently exist, national organizations including the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy (AACCP), American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP), and American College of Clinical Pharmacy (ACCP) have released recommendations to standardize programs and endorse teaching as part of residency training.^{6–8} Recommendations published by ASHP in 2014 provide guidance for best practices for Teaching Certificate Programs. This report coined the term “teaching and learning curriculum” program to avoid confusion with terminology regarding certificate programs and cites the importance of valuable post-graduate teaching education. The recommendations include knowledge, application, and practice-based core content and support.⁷ ACCP has also developed guidelines for pharmacy residency education. These guidelines encourage setting educational goals, working with a mentor to develop a portfolio, attending seminars on various teaching topics, and teaching in small and large group settings.⁸

Background of University of North Carolina (UNC) Eshelman School of Pharmacy’s TLC program

The TLC program, formerly referred to as a teaching certificate program, was developed in 2009 to give participants the opportunity to explore education as a career path and to develop teaching skills that they will use with patients, co-workers, and students. This program ensured that pharmacists were able to develop as educators as part of their post-graduate training. After five years, the program needed to be evaluated to determine if it was meeting the needs of its participants and determine any areas for quality improvement. The school’s upcoming curriculum transformation called for increased student-resident contact time

for early immersive learning, and the TLC program was considered a possible option to provide training.

Since 2009, pharmacy residents, fellows, and graduate students have had the opportunity to participate in a formal, organized program that exposes participants to careers in pharmacy education. The TLC program was developed to increase exposure to careers in academia and specifically targeted individuals serving as teaching assistants (TAs) within the school. The program was designed to involve the school’s partner institutions in the local area.

The program consists of eight pre-recorded seminars available online via the learning management platform (Sakai[®]). The seminar topics included pursuing academia as a career, teaching philosophy, preparing a teaching portfolio, facilitating small group discussions, assessing student success, preparing a lecture, becoming an effective preceptor, and planning for academic educational courses and distance education. Having modules online meant that participants could complete them at their own pace. It also meant that the co-directors of the TLC program could verify whether the modules were accessed prior to the group discussion. This is practical in a residency setting where participants have many other responsibilities outside of the TLC program and may be based in another part of the state for their residency. In addition, participants are required to attend two live group discussion sessions for three hours on campus at the end of each semester to discuss experiences and topics related to teaching. The live group discussion was led by the co-directors of the TLC program. Faculty mentors and seminar topic experts also attended the live session when their schedules allowed.

Participants were expected to develop a teaching philosophy and portfolio, precept students, and conduct didactic teaching in small and large groups. The program also includes one-on-one mentoring by a faculty member who is not directly responsible for the advancement of the post-graduate learner. Mentors were matched with participants based on interests expressed in their application essays and by specialty. Mentors assisted the participants in creating their teaching philosophy and portfolio, evaluated their teaching, and provided career guidance. Participants were required to meet one-on-one with a faculty mentor 3–4 times during the year and submitted a teaching philosophy and portfolio to their mentor for feedback. Mentors were given specific instructions on their responsibilities for the TLC program. The mentors reported the completion of activities by participants to the co-directors of the program as provided in the instructions.

Participants also provided one hour of lecture in a school course or CE program, served as facilitator for a pharmacy course, and assisted with precepting and evaluating students on their introductory or advanced pharmacy practice experiences. Finally, participants were expected to obtain faculty evaluations of their lectures, facilitation, and precepting. The objectives of the program are based on the ASHP post-graduate year 1 (PGY1) outcome⁹ “... to provide medication

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