



Short communication

A 5-year evaluation of a postgraduate teaching certificate program's effect on self-perceived teaching abilities

Ashley Castleberry, PharmD, MAEd^a, Nalin Payakachat, PhD^b,
Kathryn K. Neill, PharmD^b, Amy M. Franks, PharmD^{b,*}

^a Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Pharmacy, Little Rock, AR

^b Department of Pharmacy Practice, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Pharmacy, Little Rock, AR

Abstract

Objective: To assess the effect of a yearlong postgraduate teaching certificate program (TCP) on self-perceived teaching abilities.

Methods: Participants characterized perceived teaching abilities on a 5-point Likert scale upon entry and completion of the TCP using a 29-item teaching self-assessment instrument (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = barely acceptable, 4 = good, and 5 = very good). Four teaching-related domains were assessed: delivery of content, assessment of student learning, providing student feedback, and modeling the profession. Pre- and post-program self-assessment scores were compared using paired *t*-tests.

Results: During five program years, 81 participants completed teaching self-assessments upon entry and completion of the one-year program. Overall, teaching abilities increased significantly during the program (3.4 ± 0.4 vs. 4.4 ± 0.3 , $p < 0.001$). Each domain score also increased significantly ($p < 0.001$): delivery (3.3 ± 0.5 vs. 4.4 ± 0.3), assessment (3.3 ± 0.5 vs. 4.3 ± 0.4), feedback (3.5 ± 0.5 vs. 4.5 ± 0.5), and modeling (3.9 ± 0.5 vs. 4.7 ± 0.3).

Conclusion: Participation in the TCP results improved self-perceived teaching abilities across all program objectives over the program year, thus validating the program design and content. Such development is beneficial given the increasing expectation for pharmacists to act as effective educators.

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Keywords: Teaching certificate program; Teaching development; Self-perceived; Teaching abilities

Introduction

In its accreditation statements for pharmacy residency programs, the American Society of Health-System Pharmacists states that one of the practice skills that should be taught during residency is how to deliver effective education.¹ Programs that promote the development of teaching skills are beneficial to all residents since teaching is a component of almost all pharmacy positions, and development in teaching abilities among prospective faculty is especially valued by colleges and schools of pharmacy. Additionally, development of teaching skills is beneficial to preceptors

Data from this analysis were presented in part as a poster at the American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy Annual Meeting on July 15, 2012, in Kissimmee, Florida.

* Corresponding author: Amy M. Franks, PharmD, Department of Pharmacy Practice, University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Pharmacy, 4301 West Markham Street Slot #522-4, Little Rock, AR 72205-7199.

E-mail: AFranks@uams.edu

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.cptl.2014.02.009>

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who teach students and residents. The implementation of teaching certificate programs (TCPs) during pharmacy residency training is a fairly new concept over the last 20 years.² Perceived benefits of participating in a TCP include efficiently preparing presentations, creating concrete lecture objectives, effectively leading discussions, and critically and objectively evaluating student performance.³ Since no standards exist to direct the implementation or assessment of TCPs, programs are highly variable in structure, and little data exist to describe their effectiveness. Assessment of participants' learning should be documented and evaluated to determine the value of such programs.⁴

Since 2005, the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences College of Pharmacy has enrolled over 125 participants in its yearlong TCP. While originally developed specifically for pharmacy residents, the program is now offered to residents, preceptors, and faculty from affiliate programs across the state. As part of the participant self-assessment process, participants rate their perceived teaching abilities upon entry to the program and again at completion of the program. This analysis is the first of a series of analyses to better understand the effectiveness of the TCP. We present quantitative data to assess the effectiveness of a one-year postgraduate TCP on self-perceived teaching abilities among participants completing the program. Ongoing large-scale qualitative analyses will further reveal the strengths of this program in light of the reflective abilities of its participants.

Methods

Program curriculum

Program activities include a two-day formal teaching seminar at the beginning of the program and four one-hour quarterly seminars throughout the year. [Table 1](#) provides a description of key topics addressed in the program. Participants are required to set individualized teaching-specific goals to accomplish during the program year. Longitudinal development of teaching abilities occurs through self-directed participation in at least six unique teaching activities and continuous reflection on progress. Teaching

Table 1
Key topics addressed in program curriculum

Assessing student performance
Developing effective lectures
Developing teaching goals
Providing experiential teaching and precepting
Providing interprofessional education
Responding to learning styles
Providing critical feedback
Receiving constructive criticism
Developing a teaching philosophy
Creating team-based learning activities
Writing test questions

goals are achieved through participating in one-on-one, small-group, and large-group teaching environments, including didactic and experiential pharmacy curriculum, interprofessional education, and clinically based teaching activities. Participants receive formal multidirectional feedback on teaching activities from faculty, peers, and students. The participant's growth in teaching is reflected in a comprehensive electronic teaching portfolio that is reviewed for evidence of successful teaching development by program faculty at the end of the year.

Study design

We performed a retrospective analysis of data collected from participants upon entry and completion of the yearlong TCP during the academic years ending in 2009 through 2013. Self-perceived teaching abilities were assessed by program participants using an instrument developed to measure teaching skills taught in the program. We compared pre- and post-program scores to measure growth and development over the course of the program. The institutional review board granted exempt status to this analysis.

Participants

Participants in the program included postgraduate year (PGY)-1 and PGY-2 pharmacy residents, pharmacy faculty, and preceptors who were interested in developing teaching abilities. All participants who completed the TCP between 2009 and 2013 and completed self-assessments upon both entry and completion of the TCP were included in the analysis.

Instrumentation

Self-perceived teaching abilities of participants upon entry and after completion of the program were determined using a 29-item self-assessment instrument. This instrument was developed by the director of the TCP based on the objectives of the program, then reviewed by program faculty to ensure content validity and clarity prior to its use in 2009. Participants self-assessed their teaching abilities in four domains: delivering content (18 items), assessing student learning (five items), providing student feedback (three items), and modeling the profession (three items). Participants reported self-perceived teaching abilities on each assessment item using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very poor, 2 = poor, 3 = barely acceptable, 4 = good, and 5 = very good). [Table 2](#) contains items in each domain from this self-assessment instrument.

Data analysis

De-identified data from the five program years were entered into a spreadsheet, preserving links between pre- and post-program responses, and then transferred to Stata/SE version 12.0 (StataCorp LP, TX) for analysis. Reliability

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