

Diversified Teaching: Incorporating Personal Interests into Pharmaceutical Education

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ABSTRACT. Pharmaceutical education is a profession rife with opportunities for diversified teaching. This paper provides a description of the enhancement of pharmaceutical education via incorporation of faculty personal interests into the classroom setting. Such endeavors are an excellent opportunity for encouraging student diversification and enhancing one's own personal interests. Additionally, this undertaking may foster mentoring of, and personal interaction with, pharmacy students. Didactic elective courses, development of clinical clerkships, and promotion of pharmacy student involvement in community volunteer activities may be the product of this venture. Furthermore, unique professional opportunities for school of pharmacy students and faculty may be the direct product of this innovative endeavor. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Haworth Document Delivery Service: 1-800-342-9678. E-mail address: getinfo@haworthpressinc.com]*

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INTRODUCTION

Pharmaceutical education is a profession rife with opportunities for diversified teaching. Many gratifying personal and creative professional opportunities exist in the pharmaceutical education domain. Such endeavors are an excellent opportunity for encouraging student diversification and enhancing one's own personal interests.

I have possessed a life-long interest in animals, especially horses. What started out as an economical means of self-care for my own pets flourished into a second practice specialty. Although geriatrics is my primary area of clinical expertise, veterinary pharmaceuticals is now a rewarding secondary interest. Professionally, I am a member of the American Society of Veterinary Hospital Pharmacists.

This interest has generated many engaging drug information requests from faculty, physicians, veterinarians, and other health-care specialists. I have also gained professional experience in several veterinary practice settings, enriching my knowledge base for personal and professional gain. Several invited presentations on various topics of veterinary pharmaceutical care have resulted from these clinical experiences.

ELECTIVE COURSE OFFERING

Increasing professional involvement in the veterinary pharmacy arena culminated in my offering a didactic one credit-hour elective course entitled "Veterinary Pharmaceuticals." I have taught this course for five years, starting with an initial enrollment of seven students the first year, expanding to fifty students this year. The objectives of this class include discussion of the most commonly utilized veterinary pharmaceuticals, animal dosing methods, legal requirements when dispensing veterinary products (*e.g.*, labeling requirements), and disease transmission between animals and humans.

The instruction of this course is a wonderful professional diversion from the sometimes poignant practice of geriatrics. Furthermore, many pharmacy students will practice in rural settings where knowledge of veterinary pharmaceutical drug products and legal dispensing requirements is advantageous. Veterinarians also frequently contact pharmacists for drug information or extemporaneous compounding of an unavailable dosage form.

Field instruction enhanced the didactic course, with the pharmacy students taking a trip to my farm to learn about veterinary drug administration. This sojourn offered a unique teaching opportunity. Additionally, the occasion was a splendid opportunity for mentoring and interacting with the pharmacy students.

ELECTIVE CLINICAL ROTATION

The veterinary pharmacy exposure stimulated significant student interest in a veterinary pharmacy clinical rotation. A veterinary school in the region was very interested in enhancing veterinary student educational experiences with the drug expertise and insight of pharmacy students. The clinical experiences gleaned from this rotation are very similar to a hospital-based clerkship, with the obvious exceptions of unique patient populations, peculiar disease states, and unusual compounding opportunities. Such opportunities will further enhance future opportunities for pharmacist involvement in the veterinary pharmacy realm, as veterinarians become further educated about the unique medication expertise possessed by pharmacists. Several students have completed the clinical rotation with very positive evaluations of the experience.

PROFESSIONAL STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERISM

A personal interest in horses and horseback riding has also led to involvement as a volunteer with a local handicapped therapeutic riding program. Furthermore, my involvement served as a nidus for pharmacy, physical therapy, and occupational therapy student involvement. Student volunteerism serves to promote unity among the pharmacy and allied health students. Early volunteerism may also encourage further community involvement once professional status is achieved.

STUDENT RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Like many schools or colleges of pharmacy, our pharmacy students must complete a professional project for graduation requirements. I

have served as a faculty advisor in several veterinary-related pharmacy student projects. These projects have provided me with increased opportunities for scholarly activities and resulted in several students expressing an interest in pursuing a career in the veterinary pharmacy specialty.

CONCLUSION

Obviously, not all personal interest areas are appropriate to introduce in the pharmaceutical education arena. With a little creative manipulation, however, professional and personal enrichment is possible. Unique professional opportunities for school of pharmacy students and faculty may be the direct product of this innovative endeavor.