VIEWPOINTS

The More Things Change…

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As the academic year winds down, faculty members reflect on the preceding school year. Hallway conversations usually include a discussion of how things have changed—student behavior, faculty life, the curriculum, and finally someone will conclude that academic life was much better in the good old days. After one of these conversations, I started to wonder how academic pharmacy has changed over the last 50 years. So I traveled to the library archives to peruse volume 17 of *AJPE* from the year 1953. While I certainly found significant differences in academic pharmacy in the 1950’s, I was surprised at the themes that emerged and their consistency with the themes of the 21st century. Here are some examples:

On teaching ethics:

Our experience suggests that there is no simple solution to the problem of teaching ethics. One may give copies of one or more codes of ethics, one may require a course (or a unit within a course) in ethics, or one may “spoon-feed” the class with special lectures and lecturers on the subject. All of these together, will not in our opinion, be adequate. For some degree of success in this field, we feel the discussion in which the students take part is the critical ingredient.

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On faculty development:

The second aspect of the college or university teacher’s equipment should be an acquaintance with pedagogical method and considerable skill in using it. He needs to know how a student learns his subject, chemistry, for example, and how it can best be taught. A very common cause of failure in teaching, as is clearly shown by objective studies at both lower and higher levels of teaching, is the use of poor teaching methods. These inadequate or wrong methods are nearly always the result of a failure to understand the principles of learning and a failure to organize learning experiences in such ways that students can comprehend them.

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On developing student professionalism:

As teachers of pharmacy in its various branches, each of us by training and interest becomes proficient in developing “Scientific competency” in pharmacy students. Too often, however, we neglect the problem of developing professional morality…..It occurs to me that as teachers we have available at least three different ways in which to influence students in the development
of a sound professional morality…

First, I would like to mention the good that can be obtained through a course in the history of pharmacy. Secondly, in the courses each of us teach, we can point out over and over again in a variety of ways the professional opportunities and responsibilities of pharmacists. The third way in which teachers may exert influence on the philosophical and moral development of students is by example. Each of us has experienced differences in the impact teachers have made on him. The impact has been greatest from those teachers who have brought to the class, in addition to well organized material, an inspirational spirit."

Allen I. White, PhD
School of Pharmacy
State College of Washington

On curricular revision:

Since in any case it is impossible to teach all that is desirable, it will be necessary to submit the entire curriculum to a careful scrutiny. Material which is unnecessary, obsolete or due to become obsolete in the near future must be culled out in order to allow inclusion of more suitable material. Consideration must be given not only to what shall be taught but how it shall be taught.

Raymond E. Hopponen
University of Kansas

On manpower issues:

…the most intangible factor that I wish to discuss is the ever-present problem of manpower for the future. The present trend seems to suggest that this same problem tomorrow may be even a greater problem than it is today.

Donald C. Brodie
College of Pharmacy
University of California

On admissions

“…the schools and colleges of pharmacy have a weighty public responsibility to screen and select and to give the best qualified students an adequate educational background for civic responsibilities and professional service to the future members of the profession.”

T.C. Daniels
AACP President

The nature of the knowledge and skills taught in the classroom has changed drastically in the last 50 years. Experiential education is a major part of the curriculum and practitioner-educators are members of our faculty. Pharmaceutical sciences are taught in the context of applications to pharmacy practice. We have an alphabet soup of drugs, like PPIs and SSRIs, that could not have been imagined in the 1950s. The same can be said for the health care system with its HMOs, PBMs, and PPOs. The focus of our curriculum has shifted from passive to active learning and from the product to the patient. We are concerned not only about the right drug to the right patient but also the right patient outcomes. Through all of these changes, the basic concerns of academics seem to have remained constant. Perhaps, there is truth in the old saying “the more things change, the more they stay the same.”

REFERENCES


