How Two Librarians Became Co-instructors For a First Year Course
Shannon Gordon & Kathryn Mercer

Background

In Spring 2014, two librarians co-instructed PHARM 155 “Introduction to Drug Information Fundamentals”, a required first year course at the University of Waterloo’s School of Pharmacy. Providing students with the skills to effectively find medical and drug information, this course gave students the skills to critically appraise literature to support an evidence-based patient care model. The course was taught to 129 Pharmacy students and was a collaboration between these co-instructors:

- Course coordinator: Kathryn Mercer (KM), MI, PhD Student & Research Assistant, School of Pharmacy
- Shannon Gordon (SG), MLIS, Pharmacy Liaison Librarian, Davis Centre Library
- Dr. Dave Edwards (DE), Director, School of Pharmacy

Significance

The invitation for librarians to be involved with this course was significant because it:

1. Is information literacy at the course level
2. Moves beyond being a guest lecturer
3. Connects with Pharmacy students
4. Marketed expertise

Sample lecture topics:

- Understanding primary, secondary, and tertiary literature
- Making a clinical question searchable via PICO (Patient, Intervention, Comparison, Outcome), and identifying keywords/synonyms
- Databases: PubMed, Google Scholar, IPA, EMBASE, CINAHL
- Drug information tools: e-Therapeutics, Lexicomp, Natural Standard
- Citation best practices of The AMA Manual of Style (10th ed)
- Academic integrity issues: plagiarism and excessive collaboration
- The value of grey literature

Curriculum

Course learning objectives were mapped to the Association of Faculties of Pharmacy of Canada’s (APPIC) Educational Outcomes for First Professional Degree Programs in Pharmacy (Entry-to-Practice Pharmacy Programs) in Canada. Twenty-two hours of class time provided eleven 2-hour lectures:

- 3 lectures on critical appraisal, delivered by DE
- 6 lectures on finding medical literature and drug information, including academic integrity and citation best practices, delivered by SG/KM
- 2 lectures for group presentations, monitored and graded by SG/KM

Sample quiz question

Group project rubric

The Experience

- Very positive: steep learning curve, but it is definitely doable and worth it!
- Students appreciated receiving content early in program
- Reinforced academic integrity points
- Value of student feedback: “One thing you like, one thing you would change”
- We made the course too easy – class average high!
- Bringing in guest speakers was very helpful
- Have been invited to participate in Spring 2015 course

Assessment

A combination of assessment tools were used: quizzes, readings, individual written reflection, group presentation, group written reflection, midterm, and final exam. Quizzes and term project were designed to provide hands-on time to explore the resources and concepts covered by the curriculum.