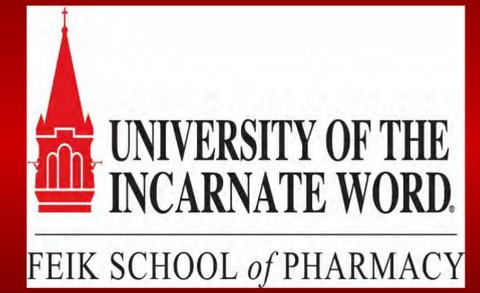


Characterization of Near-Peer-Assisted Learning in U.S. Pharmacy Programs

CK Cowey, PharmD; GL Wilkening, PharmD; SN Rinehart, PharmD; HB Patel, PharmD
Feik School of Pharmacy, University of the Incarnate Word, San Antonio, Texas



OBJECTIVE

To describe the use of near-peer-assisted learning (NPAL) in doctor of pharmacy curricula in the United States.

BACKGROUND

- NPAL is a teaching method that involves junior students receiving training from students who are one or more years their senior in the same program or level of education.¹
- NPAL is used in a variety of health professions education settings, including pharmacy, medical, and nursing school programs.
- The NPAL process has demonstrated positive results in medical education. Within medical learners, it positively influenced their learning and near-peer teachers stated it increased their leadership skills and responsibility.³⁻⁵
- There is a significant lack of reporting on how NPAL is utilized in pharmacy education.

METHODS

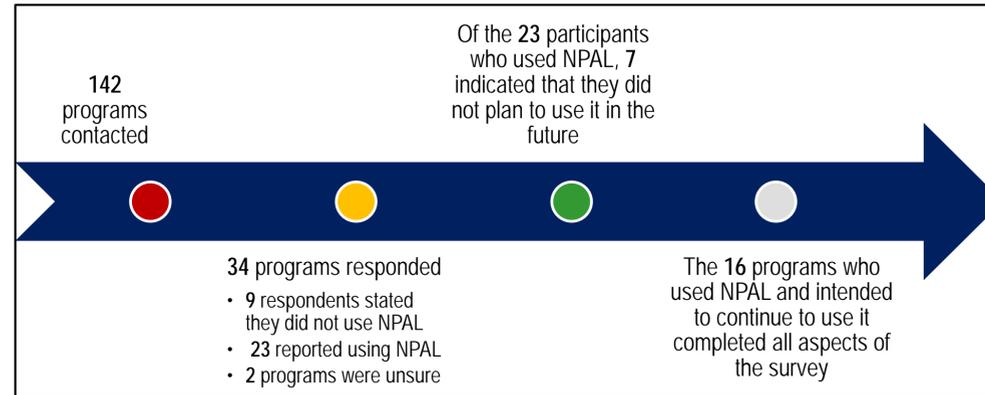
Participants: a current list of pharmacy school programs was obtained from the American College of Pharmacy Education (n=142)

An online survey was created using NPAL literature and feedback from administrative colleagues

Survey emailed to a curricular representative at each pharmacy program on 01-22-2018. Participants had 4 weeks to respond.

Data were collected using Google[®] survey and analyzed using descriptive statistics

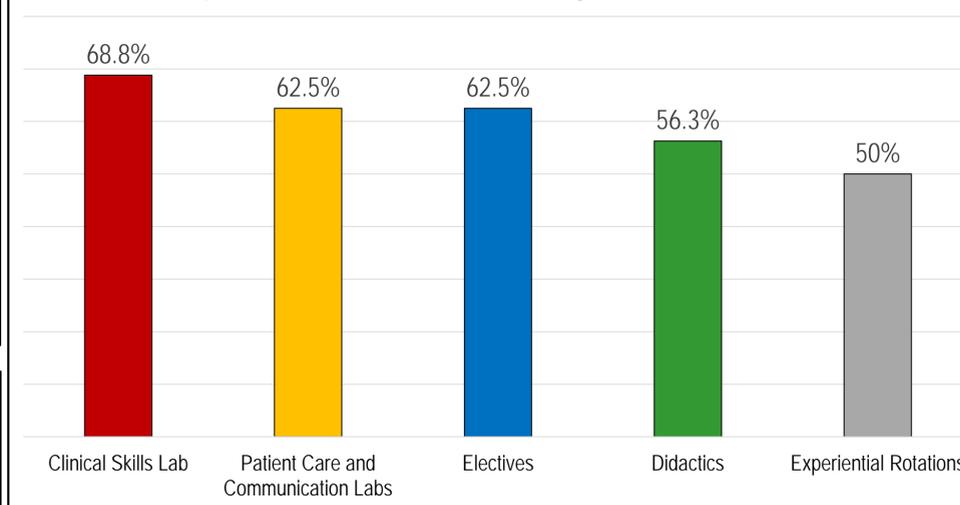
RESULTS



PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

How many years has it been since your program was established?	Less than 5 years	2.9% (n=1)
	6-10 years	23.5% (n=8)
	11-30 years	29.4% (n=10)
	31-50 years	0% (n=0)
	51+ years	44.1% (n=15)
What is the average class size at your institution? (students/year)	51-100	67.6% (n=23)
	101-150	17.6% (n=6)
	151-200	11.8% (n=4)
	> 200	2.9% (n=1)
What type of institution do you represent?	Private	50% (n=17)
	Public	50% (n=17)
What type of program does your institution currently utilize?	4 year program	70.6% (n=24)
	4+2 program	20.6% (n=7)
	0-6 program	5.9% (n=2)
	3 year accelerated	2.9% (n=1)
Do you utilize NPAL at your institution?	Yes	67.6% (n=23)
	No	26.5% (n=9)
	Unsure	5.9% (n=2)

Reported Areas for Curricular Integration of NPAL (n=16)



Described Use of NPAL Reported by Pharmacy Programs

Size of Learning Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NPAL is utilized in both large class (25+ students) and small class (<25 students) didactic lectures (n= 5 and 4, respectively). Near-peer teachers facilitated large (>10 students) (n=9) and small (<10 students) group activities (n=11). Near-peer teachers more commonly provided one-on-one student feedback (n=10), compared to general student feedback during in-class activities (n=7).
Formality of Teaching and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7 programs indicated that near-peer teachers created lectures under faculty mentorship and helped prepare students for upcoming skills assessments.
Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Near-peer teachers more frequently participated as part of an elective course or rotation (n=10) compared to volunteering on their own (n=7).
Novelty of Material	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In general, near-peer teachers did not introduce material that had not been previously introduced by faculty (n=10).
Payment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 programs indicated that near-peer teachers were paid, while 8 indicated that near-peer teachers were not.
Educational Distance Between Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 11 programs indicated that near-peer teachers were 1 course-year apart from learners 10 programs indicated that near-peer teachers were >1 course-year apart from learners

CONCLUSIONS

This academic study evaluated NPAL utilization in doctor of pharmacy curricula in the United States. Although limited by the number of completed survey responses, our findings suggest that:

- NPAL is currently utilized in a variety of ways within multiple pharmacy programs.
- Most institutions utilize NPAL within lab based settings, specifically clinical skills lab and communication lab.
- Programs generally do not allow near-peer teachers to introduce new material to students.
- Near-peer teacher training and selection processes differ significantly between institutions.

DISCUSSION

- The majority of respondents utilized NPAL within their curriculum. However, 7 programs reported that they do not intend to continue using NPAL in the future. In part, this may be due to the undefined role of NPAL in pharmacy education.
- Research is needed to better inform the role of NPAL in doctor of pharmacy education. Particular emphasis should be placed on studying:
 - The educational benefits of NPAL for both learners and near-peer teachers
 - Optimal NPAL curricular placement

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*The authors have no conflicts to report in relation to this work.