VIEWPOINTS

New IDEAS to Improve the Quality of AJPE Articles

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Academic pharmacy is a prolific scholarly environment because of traditional research and also because of activity in the scholarship of teaching. The expansion of the pharmacy education enterprise, including new schools and expanded class sizes and numbers of faculty members, along with new accreditation standards and advances in the general field of higher education are all prompting active scholarship related to pharmacy education. Many pharmacy faculty members are eager to develop new courses and make them known to their US and international colleagues. With each passing year, the *Journal* receives an increasing number of manuscripts related to new courses or other advances in instructional design and assessment; thus, a section of the *Journal* is dedicated to those papers.

In this issue, Dr. Therese Poirier and colleagues have updated the IDEAS paper that was first published in 2004.¹ Since the time of the first publication, this paper has been used routinely by *AJPE* authors, reviewers, and editors as a guide for manuscripts describing new instructional methods. IDEAS stands for Introduction, Design, Evaluation, Assessment and Summary. This paper has set important standards for work in this category, similar to standards in other fields of research. Specifically, new instructional approaches should be based on sound theoretical underpinnings, implemented with a clear set of desired outcomes and instructional objectives, and tested by state of the art methods resulting in data that can be assessed to determine whether outcomes have been achieved. The data resulting from this work then serves as a basis for conclusions about the new instructional approach. General acceptance of new instructional advances should be based on evidence that the new

method achieves the intended results, an evidence-based approach to teaching. Because new instructional methods are often costly or time consuming to implement, we must require evidence of effectiveness. The *Journal* typically does not publish purely descriptive reports about new instructional methods. While descriptions of new instructional methods are clearly important to the academy, the description alone is of minimal value without evidence that the new methods are effective. To be accepted for publication, papers in this category must conform to the IDEAS criteria.

As stated in the IDEAS paper, the guidelines apply to innovations that describe and evaluate instructional design and include new courses, parts of courses, integration of selected competencies across the curriculum, assessment of instructional outcomes, and the use of technologies and new delivery methods. The revised paper published in this issue expands on the previous version and provides more clarity and examples, particularly as it relates to evaluation and assessment. It is also intended to address questions about the original IDEAS guidelines that authors and reviewers have brought to the attention of the editors.

The IDEAS paper has had a substantial positive impact on the quality of papers published in the *Journal*. It is and will continue to be used as a standard for authors, reviewers, and editors.

REFERENCES

1. Poirier T, Crouch M, MacKinnon G, Mehvar R, Monk-tutor M. Updated guidelines for manuscripts describing instructional design and assessment: the IDEAS format. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2009;73(3):Article 40.

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