VIEWPOINTS

To Record or Not to Record?

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The availability of various educational-based technologies continues to rapidly evolve and permeate academia. Pharmacy has not been immune to this growing phenomenon, with most colleges and schools scrambling to implement programs, devices, and modalities that have been well thought out or perhaps not so well thought out. Mongahan and colleagues reported that 70% of 89 responding colleges and schools of pharmacy were using some form of video capture software.¹ Lecture capture capabilities ranging from Echo360 (Echo360, Inc., Dulles, VA) to Camtasia (TechSmith Corporation, Okemos, MI) have become nearly ubiquitous on most college campuses. This popularity has evoked various discussions regarding the potential benefits and disadvantages of lecture capture. One of the more challenging and controversial questions facing educators and administrators is whether to record classroom lectures. The primary fear for most faculty members is the effect of video capture on class attendance.² The philosophical underpinnings of these concerns reside in the ultimate purpose of video capture. From an outcomes-driven perspective, if a student can successfully demonstrate attainment of specific knowledge or skills through assessments without attending class, why attend?³ Does the faculty member's presence in face-to-face classroom lectures add value? An essential question for educators is "does it matter how students learn or only that they master the material and course-related objectives?" If faculty members lack confidence in the integrity and abilities of their assessments to accurately gauge knowledge, then this premise indicates a greater problem within our educational system.

Consideration of recording lectures should not hinge on classroom attendance, but on whether it facilitates student learning. Recorded lectures may in part appeal to the technological expectations of today's learner. When assessing the usefulness of video-captured lectures, faculty members should acknowledge the additional strategies for

teaching now available to them. Archived lectures can free actual class time for higher order and interactive learning activities.⁴ They also provide students with an opportunity to re-visit lectures or portions of lectures that they failed to comprehend the first time. For many schools, lecture capture provides a way to reach students at remote sites or campuses who otherwise may not have access. Finally, in some cases, recorded lectures can be re-purposed for use in other or future classes, thereby freeing faculty time.

Regardless of learning outcomes, one valid concern regarding classroom attendance and video capture that must be resolved is the effect of absenteeism on student life. This issue is particularly critical to professional schools, which are charged with inculcating students into the professions. Most colleges and schools rely on their "unofficial" curriculum to enhance the development of leadership and professionalism among students. One unintended consequence of recorded lectures is that absenteeism from campus might erode the viability, productivity, and influence of student professional associations and organizations. A complete reliance on online classes might hamper student ability to personally interact with individuals or groups in situations devoid of technology. This is a serious concern that should be considered by curriculum committees and administrators charged with holistic curricular review and oversight.

Faculty members must continually reevaluate their purpose in the classroom. Regardless of subject matter, faculty members exist to move students to a higher and more efficient order of thinking, to challenge students to question the world they live in, and to instill a sense of wonder. They do not exist simply to transfer information. As is the case in healthcare, the rapid evolution of technology is making information transfer increasingly nominal and obsolete.

There is no clear-cut answer to whether recording lectures is inherently good or bad for pharmacy education. It depends on many variables such as the nature of the content, teaching styles of the faculty member, and instructional design for the course. Ultimately, students need to be engaged through a variety of venues such as lectures, laboratories, and experiential activities. With careful design, recorded lectures may be a vital component of today's hybrid curricula that challenge students with expectations

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of personal accountability through an amalgam of learning modalities.

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