

LETTERS

Active Learning Should Not Be One-Size-Fits-All for Foundation Knowledge Courses

To the Editor. In their study, Rivkin and Gim¹ discuss several outstanding conclusions regarding the balance of active-learning and traditional lecture. They point out that using a variety of teaching methods can reach students with different learning styles and that a balance of methods is key to achieving student learning. They conclude that it is essential to incorporate active-learning in relevant courses yet they found that in some circumstances, students find traditional lecture to be the most optimal method for their learning. The results from this study (and others) would argue against a one-size-fits-all application of equal levels of active-learning to all courses in a pharmacy curriculum. Basic sciences instill foundational knowledge and this foundational content may well be most effectively learned through active learning combined with a higher proportion of traditional lecture.

Translational disciplines (such as pharmacology) can combine lecture with more active learning and clinical therapeutics content can incorporate even higher proportions of active-learning methods. This reasonable tiered approach is a pattern typically seen in pharmacy education.² As the implementation of active learning continues to evolve, instructors must have the freedom to design instruction techniques best suited for their discipline and students. The foremost goal should be achievement of optimal student learning rather than conformation to a uniformly dictated mold.

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REFERENCES

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2. Stewart DW, Brown SD, Clavier CW, Wyatt J. Active-learning processes used in US pharmacy education. *Am J Pharm Educ.* 2011;75(4):Article 68.