Novel Models of Precepting: The Alberta Experience
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Background
Building upon previous experiences in Alberta with a novel model, there is interest in adopting novel models of precepting in order to advance the practice of precepting. Meet expanding experiential education capacity needs in the institutional setting and expand from the traditional model of one learner precepted by one preceptor (1:1 model) 1.

Definitions
- **Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)**: Two or more learners with the same level of experience assigned to one preceptor or co-precepting team.
- **Near Peer Teaching (NPT)**: One senior and one junior learner assigned to one preceptor or co-precepting team.
- **Co-Precepting (CoP)**: More than one preceptor supervising learner(s).

Objective
To quantify the use of novel precepting models used in experiential training of student pharmacists in Alberta, their advantages and challenges, strategies to address challenges and supports needed for implementation.

Methods
- Ethics review completed and approved by A project Ethics Community Consultation Initiative (ARECCI).
- An anonymous online survey was created using the Qualtrics Survey Software.
- All institutional pharmacists in Alberta were invited to complete the survey via a global email list.
- Survey responses between July 29, 2015 and August 21, 2015 were recorded and summarized.
- Descriptive statistics and content analysis of open-ended responses were completed.

Results (n=126)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Position</th>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Practice Site Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of Practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td><strong>Experience with Novel Models</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Mgr</td>
<td>CPL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Mgr**: Manager, **CPL**: Clinical Practice Leader, **SU**: Suburban, **Amb**: Ambulatory Care, **Mixed**: Acute/Continuing Care

Advantages and Challenges
Survey participants were asked if they agreed with various advantages or challenges among the preceptor models. Below are statements that had an agreement of greater than 70% among those with experience with that model.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages</th>
<th>CoP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAL and NPT</td>
<td>NPT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As or more efficient as 1:1 learner/preceptor model.</td>
<td>Allows senior learners to solidify their knowledge/skills through teaching.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners feel less intimidated in the practice setting.</td>
<td>Instills teaching responsibility in senior learners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learners support each other; promotes clinical independence and fosters active learning.</td>
<td>Learners can split workload.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Promotes teamwork, Enhanced/Expanded Precepting skills.</td>
<td>Provides different perspectives for assessing student performance.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenges</th>
<th>CoP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PAL and NPT</td>
<td>CoP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Space/technology/computer access limitations.</td>
<td>Ensuring communication continuity between preceptors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional time to complete learner assessments.</td>
<td>Differences in learner’s levels of competency, learning styles or personalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differences in preceptors’ expectations and/or student assessment.</td>
<td>Limits ability to support struggling learners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing teaching and non-teaching workload.</td>
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Strategies to Address Challenges
Survey participants were asked to provide suggestions on ways to address challenges. A sample of responses is provided below.

- **"Space/technology/computer access limitations"**
  - Increase the efficiency of utilizing current available space/laptops/computers by staggering the usage of computers by students.
  - Utilize alternate workspaces such as library, other drop down spaces.

- **"Differences in learning styles or personalities"**
  - Have an open and supportive discussion with students, acknowledging there will be differences in precepting/learning styles.
  - Teach with a variety of methods so that different learning styles benefit regardless.

- **"Ensuring communication continuity between preceptors"**
  - Communicate a handover report using pre-determined methods that work for both preceptors.
  - Conduct student assessments as a team where possible (ensures consistency/awareness for all).
  - Create good clinical team relationships.

Supports to Implement a New Model
Among those surveyed, statements below represent supports that had an agreement of greater than 70%.

- **Work support to prepare for the placement (prior to student arriving)**
  - Education Sessions
- **List of student activities which require minimal direct supervision, or can be completed under indirect supervision**
  - Simplified student assessment tools
- **Manager support for precepting students**
  - Peer Support/Mentorship

Enhanced communication between faculty and preceptors about how to optimize this model.

Conclusion
Three novel models of precepting are being used to varying degrees in institutional practice in Alberta. The survey results provide insight for promotion, adoption and implementation of models to advance the practice of precepting and increase placement capacity.

**Key Messages**
1. A significant portion of preceptors have experience with a novel model.
2. 35% of respondents identified they are planning to trial a novel model in the next year.
3. Strong support for each model was clear in the advantages that were identified. Practical strategies to address various challenges were provided by respondents and will be utilized to prepare educational material and provide ongoing support.
4. The majority of those with no experience with a novel model were interested in learning about a model and felt it would work in their practice setting.
5. Respondents identified Faculty and Pharmacy Services leadership support is needed while implementing novel models of precepting.

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- All authors have no conflicts of interest to declare.

References:
1. Lindblad AI et al. Development and evaluation of a student pharmacist clinical teaching unit utilizing peer-assisted learning. CJR 2011;64:46-50