

THE DEPARTMENT OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES OF PHARMACY

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DEPARTMENT.

Teachers of practical dispensing will be interested in the following article by Professor Cox. The paper discusses a problem which is of great interest to all professors of pharmacy. Interest in it is becoming greater each year as our colleges of pharmacy make connection with student health services or hospitals and give their students practice in the dispensing of *bona fide* physicians' prescriptions.—C. B. JORDAN, *Editor*.

OUTSIDE PREPARATION FOR LABORATORY IN DISPENSING.

BY C. L. COX.

When Professor Nichols asked me to suggest a topic for discussion at this Seminar, I suggested the problem that has given me the most difficulty, "Outside Preparation for Laboratory in Dispensing," never thinking that I would be requested to lead the discussion.

At the school with which I have been connected, we have three semesters of dispensing, the second semester of the second year, and both semesters of the third year. Hereafter I will refer to them as first, second and third semesters of dispensing. In the first semester of dispensing the student is required to spend one or more laboratory periods, of three hours each, in compounding each of the classes of extemporaneous preparations as, infusions and decoctions, waters, pills, capsules, ointments, suppositories, etc., neatness, accuracy and technique being emphasized. In the second semester of dispensing the student is given prescriptions having incompatibilities. He is given careful instructions as to compounding them in the least objectionable way. In the third semester of dispensing, the student must depend upon his own knowledge in reading and compounding prescriptions.

Now what kind of a written report should we require of the student on work done in the laboratory? I have tried to make a "blanket" assignment, one that would cover all prescriptions. For example, I have required the student to calculate and itemize the cost of the ingredients that enter each prescription, using current drug magazines for drug quotations. This assignment gives the student a review of pharmaceutical arithmetic, changing from one system of weights and measures to another, specific gravity, formula cutting, etc. This also familiarizes the student with relative costs, and may encourage him to read current magazines. As soon as this assignment begins to become tiresome and the average student shows proficiency, I change the assignment. Another assignment is to require the student to calculate the dose of each ingredient of the prescription and compare it with the official dose. With this I sometimes ask for the medicinal action of each ingredient, and how the other ingredients of the prescription modify the action of the principal ingredient. Asking the student to report the order of mixing, during the first two semesters, is useless, for you are only requiring him to copy what he has read in his text. I sometimes ask the students of the second semester of dispensing to suggest to the prescriber, other drugs that could be used in the prescription that would have a similar action, but not the same incompatibilities; this reviews both the chemistry and pharmacology of the ingredients.