



The Fundamental Role
of the Arts and Humanities
in Medical Education



April 2024 FRAHME Newsletter

This bi-monthly newsletter is designed to keep you up to date on news from the [AAMC's Fundamental Role of Arts and Humanities in Medical Education \(FRAHME\) initiative](#). If you know others who are interested in learning more about integrating the arts and humanities into medical education, please forward this email to them. To subscribe, they can [sign up here](#).

Upcoming Webinar: Exploring the Integration of Arts and Humanities for Teaching Health Equity

Join the AAMC on June 12 from 1-2 p.m. ET for an insightful webinar on integrating arts and humanities into medical education to promote awareness and understanding of concepts in health equity. Medical educators will present innovative pedagogical approaches using history and performing arts to foster critical thinking, empathy, and humility in their students. In recognition of Juneteenth, our speakers will also share ways they have empowered learners to provide and advocate for equitable health care access and outcomes for Black patients. Don't miss this opportunity to enrich your teaching practice and be inspired to create transformative change in medical education!

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University of California Irvine Hosts a Night of Creative Expression



Diagnostic error is one of the most prevalent safety concerns in health care today. Becoming a strong diagnostician is an art as well as a science. In 2023, the AAMC, the Society to Improve Diagnosis in Medicine (SIDM), and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation awarded five grants to AAMC member institutions to host events as part of its "Art of Diagnosis" initiative. Grantees designed events with the purpose of displaying or presenting creative works of undergraduate medical students related to their experiences with diagnosis, diagnostic error, or learning the diagnostic process.

In September 2023, University of California Irvine hosted a night of creative expression with the goal of raising awareness of implicit bias in diagnostic medicine. Over thirty medical students enjoyed a thought-provoking keynote speech by Taylor Lucas, MD, MPH, as well as creative workshops hosted by peers and faculty.

Some of the available workshops included: a sculpture study where students were encouraged to focus on details by seeing multiple perspectives; a mask-making activity where they could explore beauty and transformation through reflecting on bias; and an improv class where they aimed to create explicit awareness of bias and opportunities for change.

As event organizers Juliet McMullin, PhD, and medical student Celina Yang, noted: "This powerful event created ways for students to draw on their multiple creative skills to explore and reflect on how attitudes, thoughts, and experiences can impact patients and their diagnoses. Offering engaging art opportunities is a powerful way to support medical students as whole people."

Funding was generously provided by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation for all awardees to travel, present, and celebrate their work at the 2023 SIDM conference.

FRAHME Grantees Publish Article on the Use of Visual Thinking

Strategies

In 2021, the AAMC awarded eight \$25,000 grants to U.S.-based member medical schools and teaching hospitals who would go on to design new methodology, or enhance existing methodology, to evaluate the impact of integrative arts and humanities programs or curricula across the developmental spectrum. This work was partially funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH).

One grantee team, led by Jennifer Mendez, PhD, at Wayne State University School of Medicine, has published an article in *Art Therapy* based on their FRAHME project.

Feen-Calligan, H., Serra, G., Farrell, K., Mendez, J., McQuillen, E., Murphy, C., & Amponsah, D. (2023). [Using Visual Thinking Strategies to Enhance Observation Skills](#). *Art Therapy*, 1–9.

Art therapy and medical students (N = 45) participated in Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS) to: (1) enhance observation skills, (2) examine interdisciplinary approaches to assessment, (3) determine VTS' impact on awareness of implicit bias. Quantitative and qualitative questionnaires and a post-procedure reflective focus group evaluated participants' baseline experiences and the perceived usefulness of VTS to influence observation and bias awareness. Qualitative data indicated VTS improved observation skills and enhanced awareness of implicit biases. Although the one statistically significant result questioned students' continued interest in VTS, 3 non-significant items on quantitative measures reflected gains regarding VTS to improve communication with patients, and to aid in determining implicit biases within health fields. The significance of VTS for art therapy and medical education is its potential to increase awareness of cultural biases that could impact assessment skills.

Artistic Medical Students and The Match®



For some extraordinarily talented medical students, their artistic pursuits have informed

not only their practice of medicine but also their choice of specialty, their ability to empathize with patients, and their desire to help others.

AAMCNews interviewed seven fourth-year students who shared how they successfully combined their artistic endeavors with their medical school training, and how the arts and humanities helped shape the future doctors they'll become. [Read more](#)

Recent Literature on Arts and Humanities Published in *Academic Medicine* and *MedEdPORTAL*

Our Achilles' Heel: Vulnerability and Medical Uncertainty

Kain Kim. *Academic Medicine* 99(3):p 284, March 2024

A third-year medical student reflects on how teaching the humanities can help normalize uncertainty in medical training. [Read More](#) Listen to the [author read this essay](#)

All You Need is Music: Supporting Medical Students' Emotional Development with a Music-Based Pedagogy

Marcelo Rivas, Agnes Cruvinel, Daniele P. Sacardo, Daniel U.C. Schubert, Mariana Bteshe; Marco A.de Carvalho-Filho. *Academic Medicine*, March 22, 2024.

The authors developed and evaluated an innovative pedagogical activity based on music to nurture medical students' emotional development. This activity, Emotions in Medicine, was carried out throughout 2020 and 2021 and consisted of 4 encounters to explore: (1) emotion perception, (2) emotion expression, (3) emotion regulation, and (4) the role of emotions in medical practice. During all encounters, the authors used music to evoke students' emotions and focused the discussions on the relevance of emotions for meaningful medical practice. Emotional intelligence was tested before and after the workshop using the Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT), a validated psychometric scale. Analysis showed that the workshop facilitated emotional connection among students and created a safe space to explore the role of emotions in medical practice. Between pre- and post-tests, students' scores increased across 4 dimensions: (1) perception of emotions, (2) management of own emotions (3) management of others' emotions, and (4) use of emotions. [Read More](#)

What Else We're Reading

[The Most Important Writing Exercise I've Ever Assigned, *The New York Times*](#)

An educator describes an assignment where students write down an abhorrent phrase they would never say, then she instructs them to write an empathetic monologue as if they were the person who made the statement.

[Can Improv Play a Role in Healthcare? Yes, and More, One Leader Says, *Becker's Hospital Review*](#)

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[Visual Intelligence Education as a Tool for Enhancing Medical Students' Self-Perception of Communication Skills](#), *Journal of Medical Education and Curricular Development*

A study of a 6-week course designed to measure the effect of a visual arts elective course on medical students' self-perception of their communication skills.

[Exploring the Experiences of Canadian Medical Students with a Background in the Arts and Humanities](#), *Canadian Medical Education Journal*

This paper explores the varied experiences of medical students with prior A/H backgrounds, with an emphasis on how they navigate relationships with their student cohorts and participate in undergraduate medical training environments.

[Five Ways to Get a Grip on Teaching Advocacy in Medical Education: The Health Humanities as a Novel Approach](#), *Canadian Medical Education Journal*

Authors present five ways to use the humanities as a tool for teaching the advocate role including: de-centring the physician as expert, develop engaged providers, engage learners in curricular decisions, value the humanities (and show it), and keep it practical.

[Narrative Medicine Interventions For Oncology Clinicians: A Systematic Review](#), *Supportive Care in Cancer*

This systematic review synthesizes published data on narrative medicine interventions in oncology and reports current knowledge on feasibility, acceptability, and impact on cancer care professionals.

[Through the Looking Glass: Qualitative Study of Critical Care Clinicians Engaging in Humanities](#), *Intensive Care Medicine*

This study aimed to explore how clinicians engage with a humanities program, and what role and impact the humanities play in their individual and collective journey.

Featured Artwork from AAMC Constituents



Copyright 2021, property of Margaret Brommelsiek

Essence of Texture by Margaret Brommelsiek, PhD, associate research professor at the University of Missouri Kansas-City School of Medicine and School of Nursing and Health Studies

Artist's Statement:

Artists have a long history of crossing boundaries and serving as a visual voice. I create artwork informed by my experiences within a surgical environment to elucidate connections between art and medicine. As a forum of creative production, the connections between art and medicine provide a point of departure to more fully explore the experience of surgeons, and how artists and art images can assist in addressing complex questions in medical education.

This art image was created as part of an interdisciplinary research project, *Poetics of Surgery*, designed to capture the lived experiences of surgeons and the subjective embodiment of the haptic - or, the sense of touch - to better understand how it informs agency, process, and decision-making, and its implications in surgical medical education. Touch is foundational to artists and surgeons – their materials are the mediators of action.

Using hand-pieced collage of cut-out images, drawings, rubbings, and textured paper, this work of art was inspired from a transcript containing a rich description of the haptic during

sling mesh surgery by a urogynecologist. The resulting image serves as an abstracted interpretation of the materiality of the female anatomy and its many subtle layers and textures as experienced through touch.

In creating works of art informed by medicine, I am provided opportunities to extend the research process by giving voice through art images. In this way, the created works of art not only extend my artistic practice, but my role as an ethnographic researcher to that of observer, narrator, author, and evaluator.

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