

Adapting Visual Thinking Strategies to Address a Spectrum of Healthcare Audiences: A competency based strategy

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BACKGROUND

The US Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) requires that training programs teach physicians broad core competencies, some of which are not well suited to either large classroom lectures or high-pressure clinical environments. We sought to create new and more effective methods of teaching some of the more challenging ACGME competencies based on Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Based on review of the ACGME core competencies, we created an expanded selection of visual arts-based curriculum to address those healthcare competencies suited to this format.

RESULTS

A combination medical school teachers working with professional arts educators designed, implemented and are in the process of evaluating visual arts-based teaching methods to address the following required institutional competencies of:

(1) well-being and self-care [ACGME requirements III.B.7. and III.B.7.c.2]; and general medicine competencies of: (2) compassionate care [IV.A.1.b.1]; (3) working effectively in teams [IV.A.1.b.1.a]; (4) physical examination skill mastery [IV.A.1.b.1.e]; (5) evidence-based clinical reasoning [IV.A.1.b.1.j], interpersonal and communication skills [IV.A.1.e]; (6) collaboration between healthcare team members [IV.A.1.e.1.c]; and patient advocacy [IV.A.1.f.1.e]. Each of these curricula are based on VTS, but are liberally adapted to meet the specific audience needs and local resources.

DISCUSSION

We have successfully created hands-on health professionals educational modules that address each of these ACGME competencies. The curricula are individualized to address the needs of medical and nursing students, physicians-in-training, senior supervisory physicians, nurses, allied health professionals, hospital administrators and interprofessional healthcare teams. The majority of these sessions were taught at our medical school's nearby art museums, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and the Isabelle Stewart Gardener Art Museum. Through yearly accreditation reviews, the ACGME has accepted these methods as meeting the core competency requirements. In addition, healthcare professionals find these sessions to be enjoyable and connecting activities that positively impact their sense of joy at work. The long-term impact and generalizability of these curricula are not known.

CONCLUSION

VTS methods can be adopted to meet a wide variety of the most important but challenging health professionals' core competencies. Such activities were feasible within one medical school and hospital environment at one institution, and were acknowledged as meeting accreditation standards by the ACGME and well-received by learners.

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