Renewal Webinar Series
Integrating the Arts into Medical Education

with Sandra Bertman, PhD, FT
Mount Ida College
and Richard Pretorius, MD, MPH
University at Buffalo

*Presented by the Society for the Arts in Healthcare*

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Integrating the ARTS into Medical Education

One Example: From Dissection to Palliative Care

Sandra L. Bertman, PhD, FT
Society for Arts in Healthcare Webinar
June 24, 2009
“It is commonly known that medical students dissect the bodies of the dead; it is less commonly realized that these same dead do a great deal of cutting, probing, and pulling at the minds of their youthful dissectors.”

On Dissection, Dying, and Death

Sandra L. Bertman, Ph.D.
Humanities in Medicine

Sandy C. Marks, Jr. D.D.S., Ph.D.
Department of Cell Biology

From the very first patient...
“It is commonly known that medical students dissect the bodies of the dead; it is less commonly realized that these same dead do a great deal of cutting, probing, and pulling at the minds of their youthful dissectors.”

On Dissection, Dying, and Death

Sandra L. Bertman, Ph.D.
Humanities in Medicine

Sandy C. Marks, Jr. D.D.S., Ph.D.
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2001-2002
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On Dissection, Dying, and Death

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2001-2002
Module Introduction  (August or September)

History of Dissection in Western Medicine

Sources of bodies

Tour of Anatomy Labs
Anatomical Gift To A Medical Student

This is my body.
The shell of my being
Which is given to you.

From these old bones,
These ligaments,
My sinews and my nerves,

May that life force
That ran in me
Shine forth once more
And pass to you

The knowledge and the power
That help sustain the miracle of life.
Dissection: Coping Styles  (usually October)
First Year Med Student Meets Cadaver
Memo: To Medical Students-class of 2001: Welcome!
From: Sandra L. Bertman, Ph.D. and Sandy C. Marks, Jr., D.D.S., Ph.D.
UMMC, Dept. of Cell Biology, Worcester, MA 01655-0802
Subject: On Dissection, Dying and Death
In the space below, (1) please devise an image of any sort relating to your thoughts or feelings as you anticipate the experience of dissection. (2) On the attached page, we would appreciate an explanation of your drawing or image. (3) Please mail your image and commentary to Dr. Bertman or Dr. Marks as soon as possible. We would like to incorporate these images—anonymously, of course, into the presentations in August and October. See you then. Thank you.

name_________________________ age___ date______________________________

Permission granted to use my name with image in a future presentation or publication. Please circle one: (yes) (no)
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Let’s just say I’m glad there was no art exam on the MCAT’s.
“Words cannot describe what it is like to pull back a sheet
And see a cold, anonymous, vulnerable human being...”
I wonder what her life was like...
“I didn’t expect the bodies to be wearing fingernail polish...”
“I hold her hand tightly as we cross the street....Her hand is soft and warm despite the January cold. This is what life feels like, I say to myself. I have learned something about the human touch. I will never hold someone's hand the same, old, ignorant way again.”

Rajiv Gupta, Weill, 2002, in Levin, Anatomy of Anatomy
RESPECT
Admiration for the Elegance of FORM + FUNCTION
SHOCK
Life

DISRESPECT
Sadness in the Decay to DISEASE + DISFUNCTION
acclamation
Death
In Appreciation from the Class of 1994

May 31, 1991

Memorial Service for Body Donors
One Breath Apart

You came to take me for a walk with you.
I was afraid at first
   To meet you
   To take your hand.
I pretended you were here
   To teach me the details-
   Muscles, arteries, nerves-
And I held on tight.

Then I saw your face,
   And I knew
You came to take me for a walk with you-
   On the edge
You on one side,
   Me on the other
We are one breath apart.

--Nancy Long, U Mass Medical School 1998
Facing Dissection

One Breath Apart:

Facing Death

he who teaches me to die; teaches me to live. Montaigne
Objectives:

Experience the way a close reading of a visual or verbal image teaches therapeutic competence
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Visual Case Studies Goals

• to elicit concerns
• to introduce concepts
• to enhance/build skills
• to explore attitudes
• to heal
Visual Poetry Technique:
See one. Do one. Teach one. USE one.
(see handout materials)
HOPE

Honesty

Opportunities and Options

Plan and Purpose

Expectations

Hope

Help us Jesus,

Our child is so sick,

Please help us to remember,

Endings are but new beginnings.
Visual Case Studies Goals

- elicit concerns
- introduce concepts
- enhance/build skills
- explore attitudes
- heal
Preparation for last hours of life (EPEC)

- Educating / training patients, families and caregivers

- what to expect:
  - physiologic changes,
  - events,
  - symptom management,

- tasks of caring

- communication
Closest to Death
Sleeping most of the time
Irregular breathing...

Assure of presence, safety, care of those left behind

Permission to Die
Saying Goodbye
Closest to Death
Sleeping most of the time

Visits from the Other World

Assure of presence, safety, care of those left behind

Permission to Die
Saying Goodbye
Moment of Death

Sit quietly,
Chant, sing
Share prayers

Include in conversations

Touch
Bathe body
Rituals, gestures, belief systems

Reassurances...
Sense of spirit remaining
Grief and bereavement
(Rx) Forgive me.
I forgive you.
Thank you.
XIE XIE.
I love you.
Good-bye.
Au revoir.
Shalom.
Why Arts?

We needed customary speech
But knew no custom
Therapeutic Competency

absorb, interpret, respond

meaning of stories and images

adapted from Charon, 1993
Aesthetic Competency

absorb, interpret, respond

meaning of stories and images

adapted from Charon, 1993
Every patient invites the doctor . . .
Every patient invites the doctor... to combine the role of the priest, the philosopher, the poet, the lover.

A. Broyard, 1990
In spite of our vast knowledge and our superior technology, there are times when all of us in medicine become the treatment — when what we have most to offer is ourselves.

Waller, 1995
Our responsibility is to remember that medicine is not only a science, but also the art of letting our own individuality interact with the individuality of the patient.

A. Schweitzer, 1968
Share in one true moment
You cannot prevent the birds of sorrow from flying overhead; but you can prevent them from building nests in your hair.

Chinese Proverb
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