



Training the Eye: Improving the Art of Physical Diagnosis Program Overview

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Course Description:

Training the Eye: Improving the Art of Physical Diagnosis is an interactive, preclinical course focused on the physical exam and the process of diagnosis. The course builds upon the power of the visual arts and the museum setting to enhance communication and critical thinking skills. Students practice these skills in the museum, the clinic, and the classroom, and explore and discuss their significance to patient care.

Program Goals:

1. Make careful, objective observation a habit;
2. Gain confidence in connecting form with function;
3. Exposure to local arts resources.

Course Structure:

- Elective, ten-session course. Each class includes a museum session and clinical didactics.
- Students participate in clinical rounds;
- Students practice observation through regular drawing activities
- A brief introduction to discussion facilitation and active listening.

Methodology

Museum sessions draw upon *Visual Thinking Strategies (VTS)*, a research-based methodology developed by Abigail Housen, Ph.D., and Philip Yenawine, former Director of Education at the Museum of Modern Art, New York. VTS utilizes art discussion to develop growth in aesthetic and cognitive skills. Reflective discussions forge connections between the processes of active art examination and diagnosis. Medical lectures model core competencies of diagnosis-- including

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visual literacy and history taking—from a variety of standpoints, styles and areas of specialty.

Required reading for the course includes selections from: *How Doctors Think* by Jerome Groopman, *Art and Visual Perception*, by Rudolf Arnheim, *How to Use Your Eyes*, by James Elkins, *Learning to Look*, by Joshua Taylor, and *Learning to Look at Paintings*, by Mary Acton. Another major reference is Bickley, L.S. *Bates' Guide to Physical Examination and History Taking*.

Research Publication:

¹ Naghshineh S., Hafler J.P., Miller A.R., Blanco M.A., Lipsitz SR, Dubroff R.P., Khoshbin S., Katz J.T.. Formal art observation training improves medical students' visual diagnostic skills. *Journal of General Internal Medicine*. 2008; 23:991-997.

Student Feedback (2012)

“I learned to be a patient and thorough observer. I learned about the importance of timing – both in making rapid assessments of patients as they walk in through the door but also about the time required to look at the patient – really look. I know now the importance of context – we are primed to see what we expect to find. I have learned to appreciate art in a new way.”

“I learned that observation skills are very important in physical diagnosis. When I interview patients now, I will pay more attention to their facial features, respiratory patterns, movements, etc. I also learned how to describe what I observe in both arts and medicine.”

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