



A faculty development course focusing on the humanities to promote reflection on teaching

Pablo González Blasco^a, Graziela Moreto^a, Marcelo R. Levites^a, Maria Auxiliadora C. de Benedetto^a, Marco Aurelio Janaudis^b and Raymundo S. de Azevedo^c

^aSOBRAMFA Medical Education and Humanism, São Paulo, Brazil; ^bFamily Medicine and Public Health, Jundiai Medical School, São Paulo, Brazil; ^cDepartment of Pathology, University of São Paulo Medical School, São Paulo, Brazil

KEYWORDS Staff development

The problem

Physicians who aim to teach are offered limited opportunities to reflect on their personal and professional values as teachers caring for students. The humanities offer a vast spectrum of possibilities to help physicians reflect on their teaching values and share experiences, which are core to educating students and faculty members. Resources incorporating the humanities, such as popular literature, art or movies, offer rich materials for reflection and discussion and could be included in faculty development courses because they offer opportunities for physicians to reflect on their weaknesses and frustrations as teachers, which might offer energy and inspiration for enhanced teaching performance.

The innovation

The experience consists of a nine-week course, and the sessions (five hours each) take place weekly, for a total of 45 h and 3 credits in the faculty development curriculum. The participants are postgraduate doctors (individuals who have completed their residency program and intend to conclude their MSc or PhD degree) and all of them are involved in teaching in different medical specialties. The course is provided by SOBRAMFA Medical Education and Humanism in partnership with the University of São Paulo Medical School. During the sessions, which are offered as workshops with much interaction between the participants and the mentor/facilitator, several resources incorporating the humanities are presented as the starting point for discussion. Brief readings, pieces of art, music, opera, and movie scenes, that illustrate complex moral choice, are used as prompts to stimulate conversation and reflection from the audience (Blasco et al. 2006).

For instance, movies such as *The Lion King*, *The Doctor*, or *October Sky* raise issues concerning vocation and passion for teaching; readings from *Frankenstein* (M. Shelley) and

The Death of Ivan Ilyich portray ethics in caring; and opera movie scenes from *Pretty Woman*, *Philadelphia*, or *The Shawshank Redemption* help to promote reflection through aesthetics. [Supplementary Course Materials](#) could be found here.

Evaluation data

15 physicians attended the course in four different editions over two years, while preparing themselves to become faculty members. The course was evaluated by written feedback, interviews and personal reflections in which all participants explained how they put into practice what they had learnt. One example of outcome could be seen in this reflection: 'I now decide to spend the first day not seeing patients but knowing the residents' life stories; before teaching them, I need to know who they are.' Participants also commented that the course helped them to be more focused on the individual (e.g. patients, students), listening to people's stories, and promoting a supportive learning environment. They further recognized that humanism is not about content, nor specific topics, but has more to do with the teacher's attitude as a valuable role model for students (Palmer 1998). A final issue emphasized by participants was represented in this quote: 'to help students and residents efficiently we need to improve our own commitment to teaching.'

Implications for faculty development

Resources incorporating the humanities – including movie clips, readings, poetry, music, and opera excerpts – can be easily included in faculty development courses. These resources can be used to facilitate reflection and peer discussions among physicians about challenges they face in teaching. These resources can also empower physicians to reflect on their personal and professional values as a teacher and how this might influence their teaching.

Disclosure statement

The authors have no declarations of interest to report.

Notes on contributors

Pablo González Blasco, MD, PhD, Professor in Family Medicine and Medical Humanism. Scientific Director at SOBRAMFA- Medical Education and Humanism, São Paulo, Brazil.

Graziela Moreto, MD, PhD, Professor in Family Medicine. Educational Program Director at SOBRAMFA- Medical Education and Humanism, São Paulo, Brazil.

Marcelo R. Levites, MD, PhD, Professor in Family Medicine. General Secretary at SOBRAMFA- Medical Education and Humanism, São Paulo, Brazil.

Maria Auxiliadora C. de Benedetto, MD, PhD, Professor in Family Medicine. Publications Director at SOBRAMFA- Medical Education and Humanism, São Paulo, Brazil.

Marco Aurelio Janaudis, MD, PhD, Professor in Family Medicine and Public Health at Jundiai Medical School, São Paulo, Brazil.

Raymundo S. de Azevedo, MD, PhD, Professor at University of São Paulo Medical School, Department of Pathology, São Paulo, Brazil.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Response to Malik Majeed letter

Dear Editor

Thank you for your considerations and suggestions (Majeed 2021). You are right, too short the space for sharing a 20 years' experience. The faculty course is just a little sample of SOBRAMFA expertise in teaching with humanities (Blasco et al. 2021). It is also an official course (for PhD Students) in partnership with the University of São Paulo Medical School. The point was to introduce them (future faculty members) to new approaches in teaching, not to immerse them deeply in the methodology.

As you say (Majeed 2021) about your interest in teaching with Humanities and Movies, we will suggest you get into this link, <https://sobramfa.com.br/eng/articles/movies-in-medical-education/> in which several papers detail the methodology, the process, and outcomes. And you will have the opportunity to enjoy the movies and try the methodology yourself.

Disclosure statement

The author reports no conflicts of interest. The author alone is responsible for the content and writing of the article.

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Sincerely yours

Pablo González Blasco

Scientific Director, SOBRAMFA – Medical Education & Humanism, São Paulo, Brazil

 pablogb@sobramfa.com.br