

INTEGRATING THE ARTS AND LITERATURE IN THE UNDERGRADUATE MEDICAL EDUCATION AT MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY: REFLECTION ON ACCOMPLISHMENTS, CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

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ABSTRACT: Oral Presentation

- Purpose:** Arts and literature are increasingly used in health professional education to promote empathy, observational and interpretive skills, reflection, and the health and well being of students. In this presentation I will share some of the results of my study entitled *The power to heal: promoting artistic activities and exploring the possibility of integrating an arts program in our medical school (Ingram Award)*. This study is contributing to the growing field of critical health/medical humanities in Canada and beyond.
- Methods:** I have conducted semi-structured interviews with medical students and faculty in Medicine at Memorial University and a few key informants in the UK (faculty members in innovative medical schools). I am using a discourse analysis approach for the interpretation the data as co-constructed accounts and I also locate myself as a social scientist and artist in a medical education.
- Results:** Participants discussed the value of the arts and literature in relation to learning about individuals and community, improving communications with individual patients and community as a whole, as well as being reflexive about their own assumptions and emotions. They emphasized that engaging in or appreciating the arts and literature are important to their own well-being. Moreover, they view medicine as both an art and a science. They underlined the challenges they encounter in attempting to live as a holistic and well-rounded medical student or faculty/health practitioner.
- Conclusion:** Participants felt that engagement with creativity and the arts and literature contribute to humanize medicine and, interestingly, to promote and sustain Newfoundland and Labrador's culture and identity. For participants in my study, creativity, arts and literature are not a luxury but, instead, key to the healing of patients, health practitioners and communities.