Program Overview

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. Provide opportunities for students to understand and practice competencies of the physical examination;
2. Expand students’ abilities in observation, description, and analysis;
3. Increase students’ confidence in visual and descriptive abilities;
4. Provide opportunities for developing hypotheses through teamwork.

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 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:

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