



Involving a local educator in the Medical Humanities module

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Madam,

The Xavier University School of Medicine, Aruba, admits students mainly from the United States and Canada to the undergraduate medical course. A Medical Humanities module is being conducted in the first semester since February 2013. A limitation of the module is that it primarily offers the perspective of persons working in or involved primarily with the medical profession. Toward the end of the spring 2016 semester (March 2016) the module facilitators and the Dean of Basic Sciences discussed the feasibility and advantages of involving a retired educator from Aruba as a co-facilitator.

The module uses small group, activity-based learning to explore various aspects of the humanities. In addition to an inaugural session during the orientation program, six two hour sessions are conducted. The sessions (in their

chronological order) are on the topics of empathy, what it means to be sick, the patient, the patient-doctor relationship, the medical student and death and dying.

An Aruban educator from a non-medical background has since been invited to contribute; he provides important local perspectives about the Aruban healthcare system, what it means to be a patient on Aruba, and the patient-doctor relationship on the island.

The local educator draws on his rich experience as an educator and from his years of life on the island. He facilitates small group activities and adds to the discussions. The educator is also involved with the standardized patient program at the institution and provides valuable inputs to students participating in the module on interacting with local patients.[1]

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All students who complete the module are awarded a letter of module completion and the local educator is one of the persons who awards the letter to successful students. He has been involved as a co-facilitator for all sessions during Summer '16. Informal student feedback obtained about involving the local educator in the module was positive; we plan to obtain formal feedback after involving him in future modules. We use

paintings, case scenarios and literature excerpts in the module and with the help of the local educator are planning to introduce some paintings and literature from Aruba in future sessions.

In our experience, local educators from a non-medical background can contribute substantially to Medical Humanities modules.

References

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