

ART OF DOCTORING JOINS THE 21ST CENTURY

Slide 1 – As the fortunate recipient of an iPad Initiative award, I decided to apply modern technology to a class I've taught with physician colleagues for 10 years, Art of Doctoring.

Slide 2 – Art of Doctoring is a 20 week, longitudinal elective for 4th year medical students. It emphasizes development of self-awareness and reflection, cultivation of empathic and compassionate attitudes, enhancement of communication skills, and attention to positive team-building, all in the service of improved patient care

Slide 3 – The problem that we hoped technology could solve was a discrepancy between our intentions and our execution. AoD was supposed to be an intimate experience of sharing and openness. But because about a third of the graduating class typically enrolled, many students do not participate in the class discussions that form the core of the experience. These non-participating students might be bored, but we also thought they might be uncomfortable making personal statements or subjective comments when there were no right and wrong answers.

Slide 4 – On the advice of Julie Youm, I decided to implement todaysmeet and the Merlin discussion board. Todaysmeet offers a Twitter-like option to comment in real-time on an ongoing lecture or discussion with anonymity. The Merlin discussion board allows students to post written assignments while classmates can respond with fuller commentary.

Slide 5 – I decided to use todaysmeet with an exercise called Inspirational Object, part of a session that focused on Finding Meaning in Medicine. The Merlin discussion board provided a perfect opportunity for students to post their final assignment, writing a personal Hippocratic Oath, and have classmates post responses.

Slide 6 – In the Inspirational Object exercise, students chose an object such as a photo, keepsake, charm, poem, saying, prayer, picture, or piece of jewelry, that inspired them to be the best doctor they could be. They bring the object to class and share the story behind it. Classmates are supposed to comment on the object. We hoped introducing todaysmeet for this activity would encourage more students to get involved.

Slide 7 – These are examples of objects students brought to the session this year: a stethoscope, teddy bears, a baby's t-shirt, a drawing by a patient, a pager, and a picture of Jesus guiding a surgeon's hand.

Slide 8 – Most of the comments from todaysmeet were supportive.

Slide 9 – Some were distracted, as when someone started taking pictures outside or when someone started posting about a spelling error. A few comments were more

philosophical in nature. And, as we'd hoped, quite a few comments were critical of the assignment (I really didn't want to choose an object because it's not really the object that motivates us but the people); and a few put the respondent in a potentially vulnerable position, such as the person who acknowledged he had "used" his medical student role to either get things or get out of things; or the student who wondered whether the presenter was glad she'd stayed in medicine; or the student who acknowledged that medicine can be all-encompassing.

Slide 10 – Twelve of 18 students present responded to a brief evaluation survey designed by Julie Youm. Almost all students agreed that the 140 character format was sufficient to express their comments. About half the respondents said that they'd posted comments they would not have expressed verbally. A little over half the respondents reported that being able to comment anonymously was important to them. The respondents were split as to whether or not the todaysmeet format was distracting, as well as whether it enabled them to be more participatory in class. Almost all students reported that using todaysmeet was enjoyable.

Slide 11 – For the personal Hippocratic Oath, students write a brief personal statement using language of supplication (Help me, Give me, Inspire me...). These are then read aloud in class, and classmates are expected to respond.

Slide 12 – Example of a student's Hippocratic Oath

Slide 13 – Because of a software glitch, students were unable to post on Merlin. Therefore we ended up using todaysmeet again. Student comments were uniformly positive and supportive.

Slide 14 – Integrating technology, while not a complete success, was intriguing and interesting. In terms of future directions, I intend to continue to explore these applications in the Art of Doctoring class. One possibility is to use todaysmeet with the class lectures, with the goal of involving more of the class. Despite the technical failure this year, I want to use a Discussion Board format to post student written assignments and generate responses from classmates. Finally, I am interested in incorporating flipped classroom principles by having guest speakers make podcasts of their presentations, in order to devote more time to group discussion. There are many exciting possibilities ahead!