



Mask-Making: An Autoethnographic Examination of Professional Identity in Undergraduate Medical Education

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PUBLISHED ABSTRACT



ABSTRACT

In addition to providing medical students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to gather and synthesize information to accurately diagnose and treat disease, medical education must also help students develop a healthy professional identity. The process of professional identity formation (PIF) is less formal and typically not part of the published curriculum. Despite the importance of PIF, it is difficult to analyze and has typically been done so through narrative means. We propose the artistic process of mask making as an alternative, where medical students visually express their perception of an ideal physician (external face of the mask) and their sense of self (internal face of the mask). Mask making allows students to use descriptions and illustrations on the inside and outside of the masks to express their sense of developing professional identity. A cohort of 148 masks from the Class of 2022 at the Penn State University College of Medicine is being analyzed to compile a list of these illustrations and descriptions. This qualitative data is being sorted according to domains modified from the original Transformation in Medical Education (TIME) initiative PIF framework. Specifically, the TIME framework was edited to include the subdomains, abilities and emotional traits, to the personal characteristic's domain due to the frequency of qualitative data that aligned with these distinct subdomains. This modified framework has been used to create a codebook using the qualitative coding software, NVivo. After using a subsample of masks to achieve sufficient interrater reliability, we will code the sample cohort to define thematic elements consistent across ideal and self images. We plan to use this method to assess PIF longitudinally in this class of medical students. Our findings should inform opportunities for intervention to alleviate some of the obstacles medical students face as they integrate personal and professional identities.

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