

Visual Thinking Strategies for Medical Students - The Teacher Experience



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Background

What is VTS?

Teacher facilitates a discussion on carefully-selected images of increasing complexity.

US schools, recently- medical schools.

A VTS facilitator helps students:

- Look carefully at works of art
- Talk about what they observe
- Support their ideas with evidence



What's going on in this picture?
What do you see that makes you say that?
What more can we find?



Why VTS?

VTS is thought to enhance:

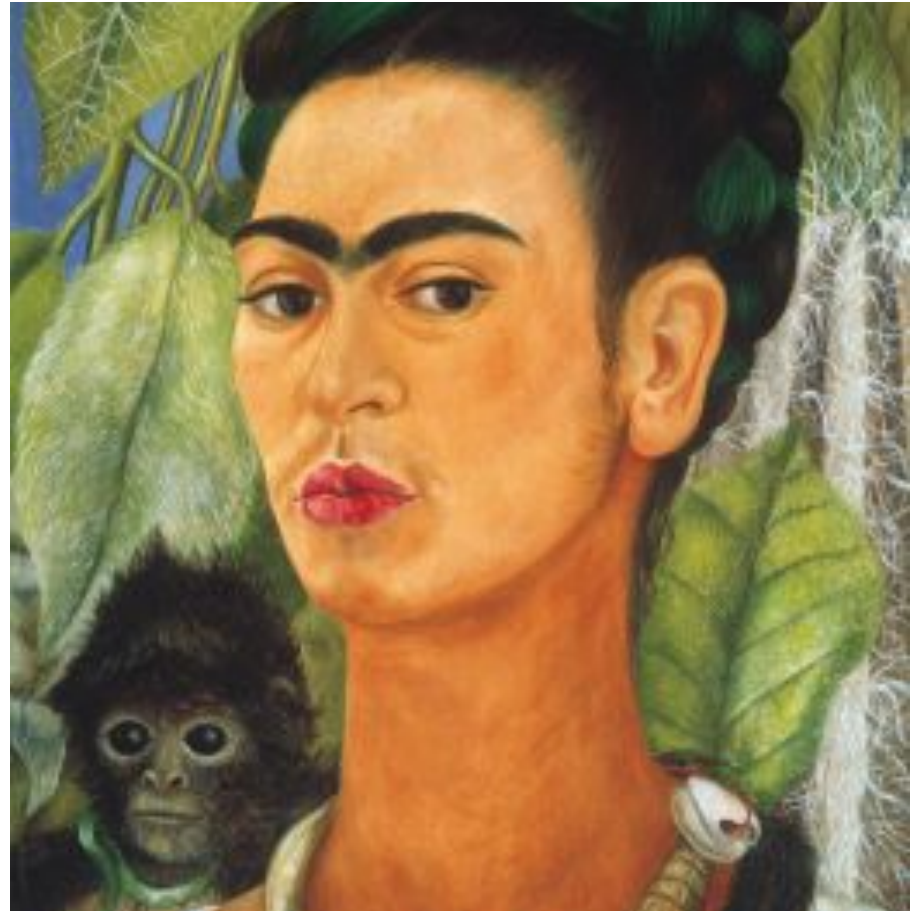
- Observation Skills
- Critical thinking
- Help students understand ambiguity and difference of opinion.



How is VTS relevant to Medical Education?

Benefits of VTS shown to be carried over into other activities.

- **Observation**
‘Sapere Vadere’
- **Critical Thinking**
- **Teamwork**



VTS in UCC

VTS introduced into Healthcare Curriculum in 2013.

All schools CoMH teach VTS.

- First European University to use VTS in Medical Education.
- Benefits of VTS for medical students subject of a current Final Med Project.



Origin and Aim of Study

To identify potential benefits of VTS facilitation for **medical educators.**



Methods

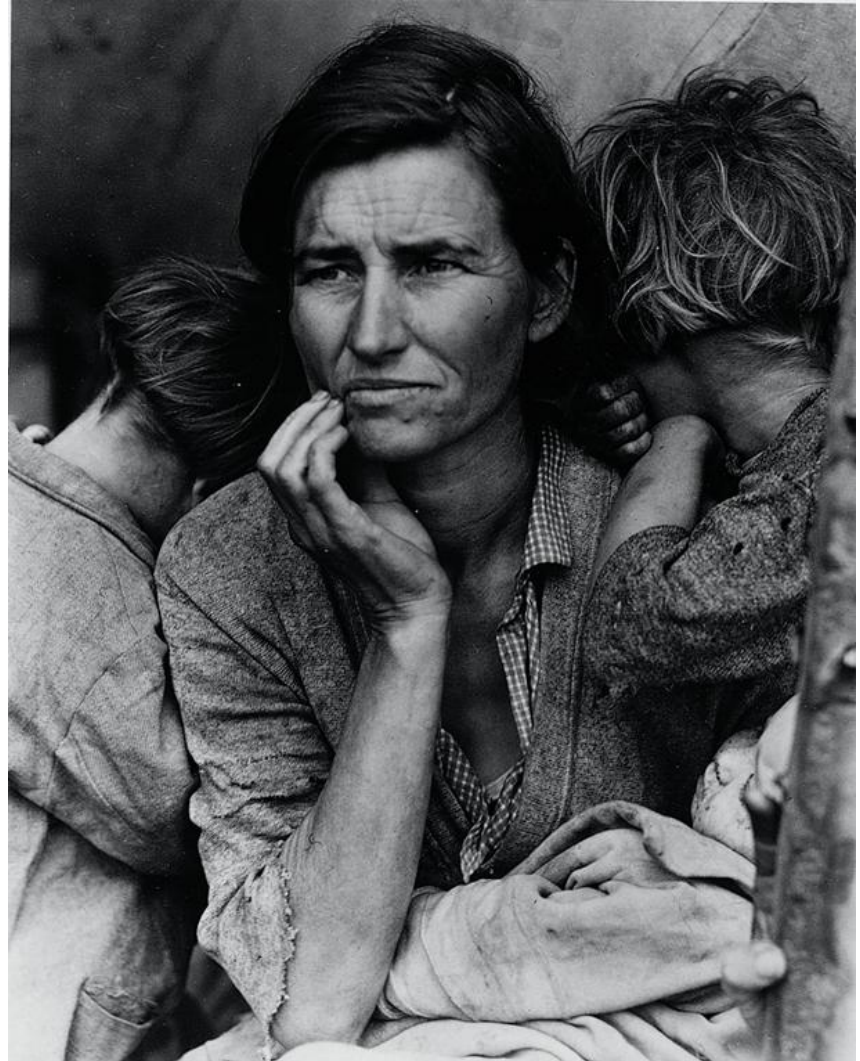
- **Semi-structured interviews** with facilitators recorded and transcribed (n=10).
- Facilitators completed a confidential questionnaire (open-ended questions exploring attitudes to VTS).

Responses analysed, key themes identified and grouped.

Results

Benefits of Teaching VTS:

- Listening skills
- Observation skills
- Group facilitation skills/
group dynamics.
- Enjoyable!



What They Said...

‘It made me look more closely – I had missed a number of things.’

‘We all see things so differently.’

‘VTS changed my own thinking about my students – I saw them in a different light, as multi-dimensional and talented individuals.’

‘I saw a different side to my students- how they communicated, how they interacted and worked together.’

‘It helped me stand back, and give the students more time.’

What They Said...

‘I can see now how VTS can change the class dynamic – students learn to understand each other.’

Challenges:

- ‘Learning to be non-judgmental was difficult.’
- ‘I learned how much I interrupt normally in clinical teaching.’
- ‘VTS made me aware of different cultural interpretations.’
- ‘I use the VTS techniques in other settings such as feedback.’

Other Observations

- Medical students engaged well - quick to make new observations.
- VTS improved contributions from students of different cultural backgrounds.
- VTS provides a unique opportunity to teach across all disciplines.
- Students engaged better with works of art than medical images.

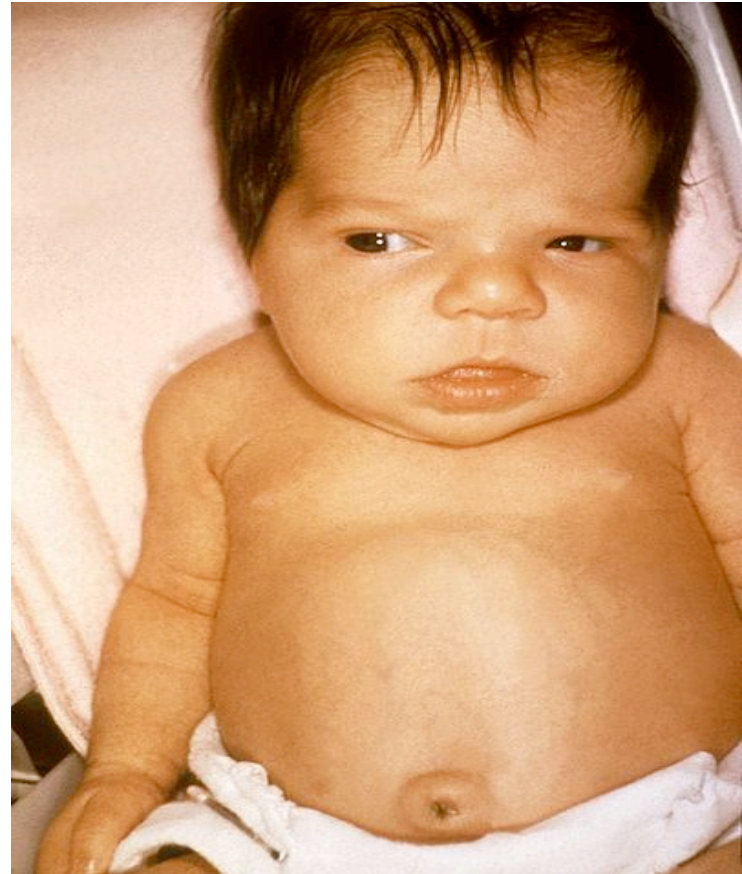


Conclusions

VTS facilitation – Potential Benefits

- Skills in attentive listening
- Focused observation
- Expert facilitation
- Managing group dynamics

**VTS can be used in a variety
of medical educational
settings**



Thank You!

Professor Tony Ryan, Consultant Neonatologist/Paediatrician
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Anyone for VTS?

