

## **2014-2015 Milwaukee Public Museum Teaching Fellowship**

### **Final Report**

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As a teacher, I am always seeking opportunities for developing innovation in the classroom in hopes of improving teaching effectiveness. I have always held that active learning and interaction with material is pivotal for students to learn material instead of mere memorization. This is often further accentuated when the environment is changed from the classical classroom to some other classroom. However, when I first saw the announcement for the Milwaukee Public Museum (MPM) Teaching Fellowship, I almost deleted it immediately without considering it fully. I am very glad that I did not delete the announcement! After exploring the MPM web site and thinking about ways that the MPM could improve my courses, I developed and successfully implemented an active learning experience for students in the classroom called the MPM.

The incorporation of the cultural and historical exhibits and collections at the MPM is exciting and has greatly enhanced a course called Biomechanics II. This course is concerned with the study of human movement. This course taught in the Physical Therapy program to students in their first year. It is the second in a sequence of two courses that investigate the mechanical and anatomical bases of human movement. During the first few weeks of this class, I introduced students to the concepts of posture and gait. These are approached from a very mechanical perspective, sometimes seeing people more as machines than individuals. During the process of learning about posture and gait, through a variety of learning environments, my goal was to increase retention of the course material. The addition of the MPM to this course also allowed students to apply what they were learning to the real world, which further increased their learning. By changing the “classroom” environment and encouraging real-world application through the MPM’s exhibits and collections, the learning of the students have been enhanced.

In the Carroll University Doctor of Physical Therapy Program, we attempt to integrate patient values into every classroom. One of the areas of patient values is thinking about and providing care in a culturally competent fashion. At times, this is difficult because of the fairly homogeneous makeup of students in the program and at Carroll University. This is where the museum’s exhibits provide many different contexts in which to discuss the influence of culture and environment on human posture and locomotion. By using the various exhibits, students were given an opportunity to compare and contrast culture’s influence on movements to varying degrees. From this, they will provide physical therapy to a diverse population in a culturally competent manner.

After their experiences at the MPM, students will submitted a video blog (vlog) reflecting on their experience. For the vlog, each student was required to develop a thesis regarding the interaction between culture and posture/locomotion and a thesis regarding the interaction between environment and posture/locomotion. The vlog was concluded with a short reflection on their experience and how it influenced their learning and understanding. The videos were then posted on YouTube and graded. I have included links below to a few exemplary examples from the course vlog assignment:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqyc3JCubF8>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5c5VXESlIDo>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1L1UA2aMq7E>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWOUxyvuiO0>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJm84bx5ivs>

In addition to the primary focus of culture and environment, students were also able to examine the Sampson skeleton up close and received a preview of the new exhibit at the MPM. I received anecdotal feedback about both of these experiences. Students really enjoyed the ability to compare and contrast Sampson's skeleton to a human skeleton. Students were taken aback by how similar and yet different Sampson's skeleton was from the human skeleton. Student also enjoyed the preview of the Crossroads of Civilization exhibit. They were impressed by the time and detail that is necessary. Feedback about both of these experiences was extremely positive!

Overall, I believe that these experiences have greatly enhanced student learning through active engagement in the MPM's exhibits and collections. I look forward to continually providing students with this experience each year in the DPT program at Carroll University. Thank you to the MPM for granting me this opportunity as a MPM Teaching Fellow.