



Creating Quality in the Core Curriculum: constraints and the future

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EALTHY and JASMEE

- What can EALTHY give you?
 1. Contact with teachers of English for Healthcare in Europe and elsewhere
 2. The dialogue which leads to a shared and dynamic understanding of the profession

Aims

Vision....an answer to these questions:

What is a doctor?

What is the role of the EMP/EAP teacher?

Strategy

What kind of structure should an EMP/EAP curriculum have? What constraints do we face?

Support

Who should curriculum developers talk to?

The magic of the machine



De Forest Kelly as Leonard
“Bones” McCoy, Ship’s Surgeon.

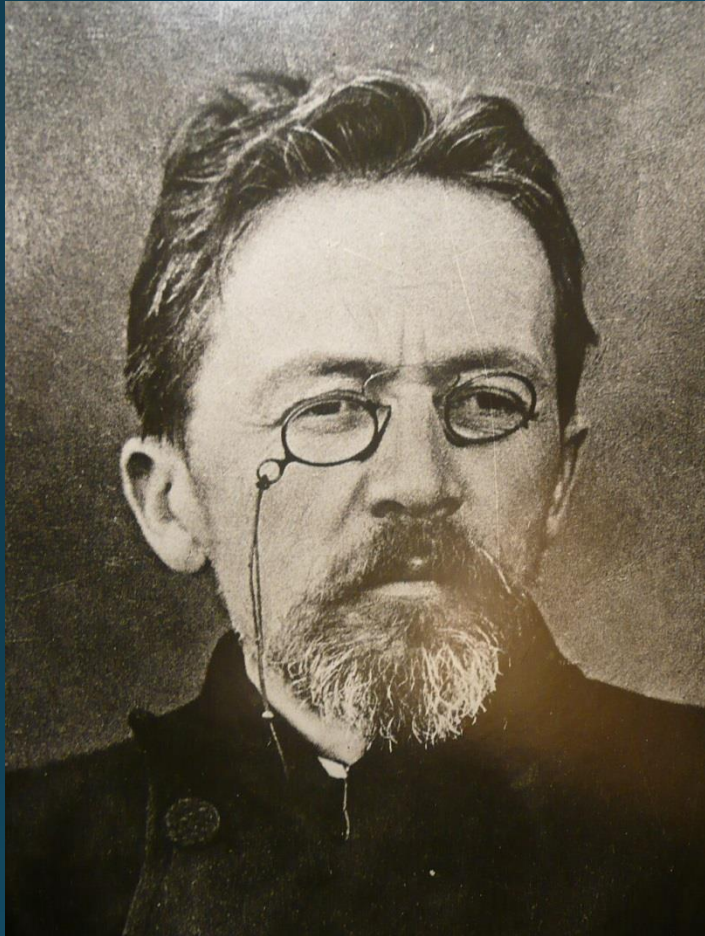
Star Trek 1969

What is Dr McCoy for?



'Goya in gratitude to his friend Arrieta for the skill and care with which he saved his life in his acute and dangerous illness suffered at the end of the year 1819 at the age of 73. He painted it in 1820.'

Francisco Goya.
Self-portrait with Dr Arrieta
Institute of Arts, Minneapolis



Anton Chekhov. c1904

Chekhov as medical student

“(he) did everything with attention and a manifest love of what he was doing, especially towards patients who passed through his hands. He listened quietly to them....even if the patient was talking about things quite irrelevant to the illness. The mental state of the patient interested him particularly. As well as traditional medicines, he attached great significance to the effect the doctor had on the psyche of the patient, and on his way of life”

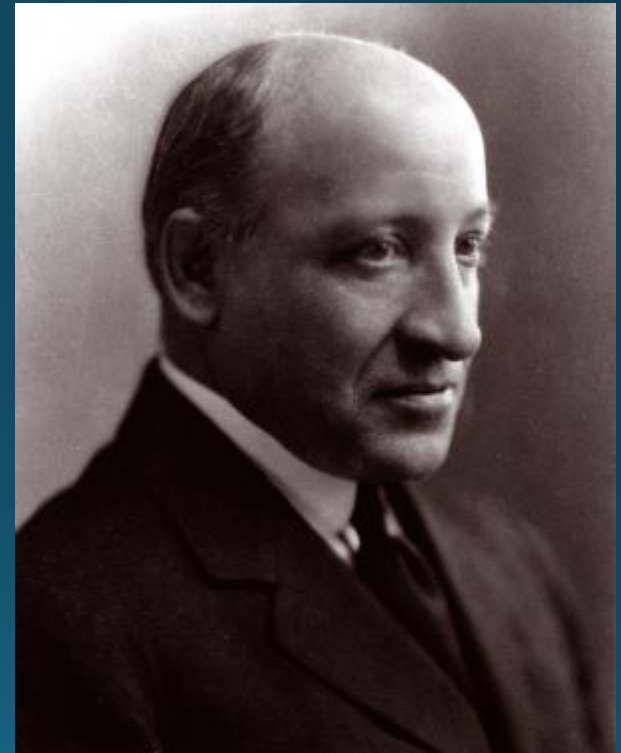
(Dr Pavel Archangelsky, in letter to Alexander Chekhov, 1883. Cited in Coope, J. 1997)

(My italics)

Hugh Cabot on curriculum design

- “Nowhere in this curriculum is there any requirement which would particularly qualify the student or interest him in the mental or psychological behavior of mankind.”

(Former Dean, Michigan Medical School)



Cabot

- The course.....must prepare students to become the medical counsellors of the community
- Students.....must be educated people in the broadest sense of the word since no problem in medicine can be judged....except by the use of a wide perspective
- The problems of medicine on the whole are quite as likely to require sound judgment based upon a knowledge of history, sociology, philosophy and psychology as on the facts of science

It was, of course, assumed that the purpose of the premedical course was to prepare students for the study of medicine and to enlarge their perspective in the field of general knowledge. If the course is really to fulfill its purpose, it must prepare students to become, if they have the capacity, the medical counsellors of the community. It would seem evident that if they are to achieve this distinction they must be educated people in the broadest sense of the word, since no problem in medicine can be judged to the best advantage except by the use of a wide perspective.

I am not prepared to admit at the present time that in the equipment of the practitioner a knowledge of science is of more real value than a knowledge of the way in which mankind has behaved in the past and how he is on the whole behaving at the present time. The problems of medicine, on the whole, are quite as likely to require sound judgment based upon a knowledge of history, sociology, philosophy and psychology as on the facts of science.

Rhetoric, character and “the professionalization of virtue”¹

It is not true, as some writers assume in their treatises on rhetoric, that the personal goodness revealed by the speaker contributes nothing to his power of persuasion; on the contrary, his character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses

(Aristotle: *Rhetoric* 1:1356a)

(¹Garver 1994)



Raphael: *School of Athens* (detail).
Vatican Palace, Rome. 1511. Image
courtesy of artchive.com

The professionalization of virtue

Interactive Studies Unit, Birmingham University Medical School

Thinking to some purpose

Enacting values

Change through language



www.bham.ac.uk/ISU

The role of the doctor is...

- As always –

To think clearly and with purpose

To present him/herself as he wishes to be seen

To do things with words

What is the role of the EMP teacher?

- To use their knowledge of language to help their students to think clearly and with purpose
- To help their students enact their values, and present themselves as the kind, human people they seek to be
- To help their students do things with words
- *The role of the EMP teacher is to be a language teacher*

Aspects of strategy

The Limits of Needs Analysis

- 1. The patient with epilepsy
- 2. The frightened patient
- 3. The traffic police in Cordoba

....some things you can plan for, others you can't

Hierarchy for curriculum design: example I

- Task: To order a coffee in a café in England
- Social context: To understand types of coffee, sizes of coffee etc
- Discourse elements: Eg politeness levels
- Microlinguistic elements: Can I have...basic vocab etc



Saltdean Cliffs, near Brighton. JRS 2026



Coffee shop, Saltdean near Brighton. (JRS)

Hierarchy for curriculum: example II...

- Task

“To understand the structure of an article in *The Lancet*”

- Socio-cultural context

Eg “To be aware of the value of participating in research, and of the role of English”

- Discourse elements of task

Eg “To understand the purpose of the main sections in an article”

- Microlinguistic elements

Eg “To look at reporting verbs in the Introduction”

See eg JM Swales *Genre Analysis* (1990)

Also see JR Skelton, *Writing for Publication*,
specialistlanguagecourses.com (2024)

Problems and Constraints (the fun part!)

- ESP teachers thought of as “just” language teachers
- Many teachers are not very flexible
- Many subject specialists are language blind
- Many subject specialists are poor at designing a curriculum

Be realistic. Be tough. Be ambitious. Be patient.

- How many contact hours per student are available?
- How many teacher hours are available?
- How much will this cost?
- Who will fund it?
- How much resistance will we meet?

More questions.....so more patience

- How will students be tested?
- Who will agree the curriculum is appropriate?
Who will ensure standards are met and maintained?

Play the management game

- Below is the total preparation required for this game
- Say to a group of participants
- “You have been asked to design a course for elementary students to help them read a medical paper in English. Spend 10 minutes deciding what additional information you need, then ask me”.
- Make up the answers, write them down, and repeat.

Tactics:
Discussion and support



Cleaner with Palace guard.
Early morning conversation.

JRS, Rajasthan (2016)

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Our Mission

EALTHY's mission is to improve the design and delivery of English for Healthcare courses wherever they take place.
To achieve this, we do the following:

- support the professional development of those involved in teaching, researching and writing content for English for Healthcare;
- enhance the quality of both the teaching and learning of English for Healthcare through developing shareable resources and expertise; and
- promote and disseminate understanding of English for Healthcare through events, webinars and networking.

EALTHY (ealthy.com)

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EALTHY is.....

“....the global association for the teaching of English for Healthcare, and the go-to-place for all things Medical English

EALTHY provides professional development, training and services to teachers, researchers and educational institutions around the world. EALTHY publishes research, articles, teaching and classroom resources. EALTHY organises regular events and networking opportunities for members.....”

More about EALTHY

- Free entry to our workshops
- Free EALTHY research and articles
- Free teaching materials



7TH INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH FOR HEALTHCARE CONFERENCE 2026

English for Healthcare: from expertise to practice

EALTHY



📅 September 11th and 12th 2026
📍 Jagellonian University Medical School



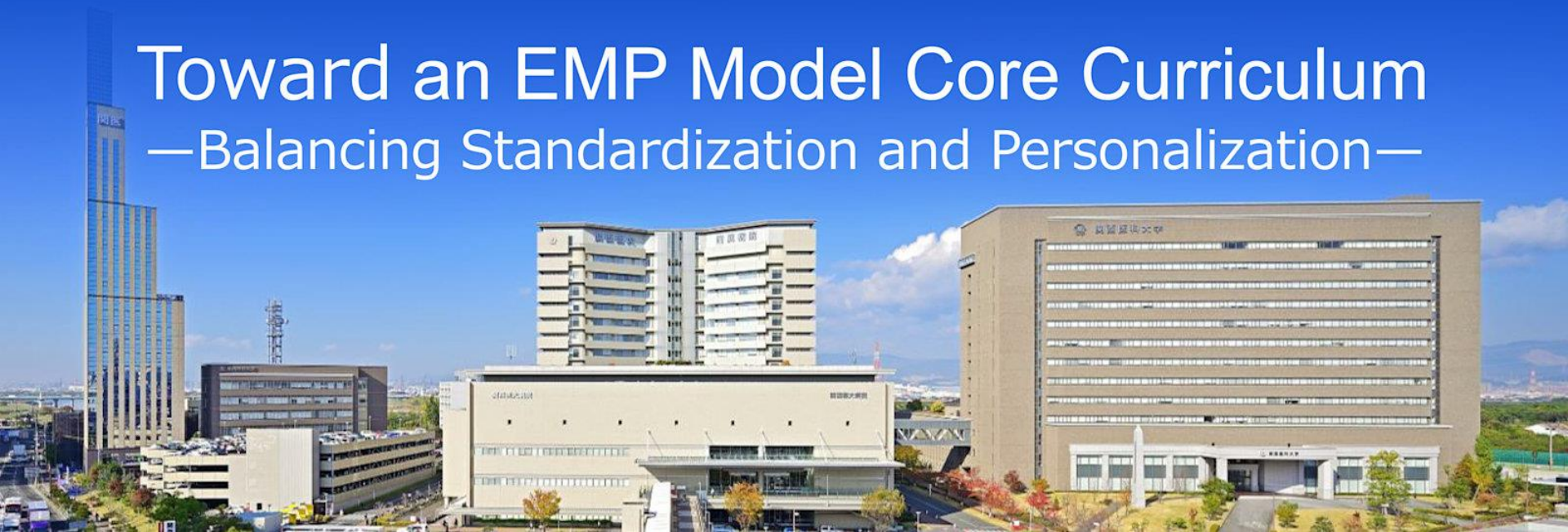
Innovating Medical English Teaching with AI | Symposium 2025

Innovating Medical English Teaching with AI provided a range of thought-provoking presentations and discussions on AI usage in teaching and learning English for healthcare.

The event focused on the current and future role of AI in clinical communication and medical education from multiple perspectives.

The speakers presented a theoretical background and a review of the latest research as well as shared their experience and tips on using AI in teaching and materials design. [Watch the presentations](#)

Toward an EMP Model Core Curriculum —Balancing Standardization and Personalization—



EALTHY and SLC (Specialist Language Courses)

- (See ealthy.com/professional-development)

Note: Institutional Licenses available

850 hrs of medical English content available, including eg:

C Richards. *An Introduction to Medical Humanities*

JR Skelton. *Writing for Publication*

Closed group sessions include:

Preparing Medical Lecturers to Teach in English

How to Prepare Healthcare Professionals for OET

How to Teach English to Healthcare Professionals

In conclusion...

- (Remember that this is the view of an outsider!)
- Is there momentum behind the concept of a core curriculum?
- If there is, can you reach agreement about what a “core” would be....
-and how many hours you would need to teach it (be clear about how you count hours – 1 hour in a group of 100 is not the same as 1 hour in a group of 8)
- If this is going well, decide how to make it happen