Supplemental Digital Appendix 1

An Exemplar Student Signature Reflection From the Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons Portfolio Curriculum Written After the Third Semester of Medical School, December 2016

*Signature Reflection writing prompt*
Look at your previous Portfolio writings. Think of your writings as a mirror; write about what you see.

*Exemplar student Signature Reflection (used with permission)*
Perhaps because we’ve had an endless series of transition events or because it’s just a common theme, I see a lot of commentary about change, growth and making tough choices in my portfolios. I also see a desire to understand my role in unfamiliar environments.

In my portfolios, I see someone who’s balancing nostalgia and maturity. In my response to The Train Ride,[32] I described an appreciation for open agricultural lands and trains that dominated before the crowded complexes and rapid plane rides of more modern times. However in The Purple Crayon,[33] I describe the importance of changing and making decisions that will allow the narrator and my friend to get out of negative situations and move forward. In my response to the “working on you” story,[34] I talk about a child wanting to make a lasting impression, but interestingly, in my response to [the visit to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting] I focus on wanting to be invisible, a silent observer in an uncomfortable situation.

I can see the relationship between some of these battles and patient care. As every spokesperson for [Major Clinical Year] has described the transformative nature of the next year, I will have to balance being true to myself, my passions, priorities and personality with being aware of when it’s time to make changes based on personal or external feedback. I will try out many different techniques and goals throughout the year, but I hope that regardless of how this year goes, I will still be proud of my December 2016 self.

As was emphasized in our lecture on [Major Clinical Year] roles, we should focus on helping the patient and learning throughout the year. For my patients, I would hope to make a strong impression in providing compassionate and helpful relationships and care, but I also recognize that I will be nervous and may be inclined to be invisible during rounds with my superiors to avoid saying the wrong thing. I hope that I move away from this tendency to be a silent observer and recognize that being a contributing participant is the only way to learn effectively and provide the greatest support to my patients.

*Authors’ note:* In this Signature Reflection, the student referred to 3 portfolio entries written after close reading of the texts below using the respective writing prompts.
   Portfolio writing prompt: *Write about things that go on*
The Purple Crayon, poem by James Tolan.³³
Portfolio writing prompt: Write about a time when you wanted to be the hero

Christmas Eve, short story by Eduardo Galeano.³⁴
Portfolio writing prompt: Write about a story that is working on you
Interview Guide for Focus Groups Conducted From January to August 2018 With Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons Class of 2019 Students on Signature Reflections

General impressions (student, peers)
1. So just to start off, very broadly, what did the Signature Reflections do for you?
2. From your perspective, what are the Signature Reflections for?
3. Let’s consider the Portfolio as a whole, which includes Signature Reflections but also other entries.
   a. How was the Signature Reflections different than other writing?
4. Now that we heard your impressions of the Signature Reflections, think about your friends.
   a. Do you have any sense that they got the same thing from the Signature Reflection as you did?
   b. Or did they get something different?

Signature Reflections experience
5. How did your experience of writing Signature Reflections change over time, if at all?
6. Sometimes it’s helpful to ask, “Who am I writing for?”
   a. How did your answer to this question change over time, if at all?
7. Was there a point in time when writing a Signature Reflection seemed most relevant?
   a. How was it relevant?
8. During MCY [major clinical year (i.e., semesters 4 and 5)] you were asked to choose previous entry and keep writing – what influenced your decision to choose the entry you did?
9. How has your preceptor [faculty-mentor] influenced your Signature Reflections, if at all? (This question was added after the first focus group, as a result of students’ comments.)

Closure
10. Is there anything else you think I should know about writing Signature Reflections that we didn’t talk about?

a An element of the Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons Portfolio curriculum. See the main text and Table 1 for additional information on this curriculum and Signature Reflections.