

PATIENTS STORIES IN LIFE SCIENCES AND SOCIETY COURSES:
A VERSATILE TEACHING TOOL

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ABSTRACT

Narratives are widely used instructional tools, and a growing body of evidence supports their positive impact on learning. While there is substantial research on narrative-based teaching practice in medical education, little is known about how college instructors use narratives to teach undergraduate life science courses. This research focused on narratives that incorporate experience from patients who are affected by genetic conditions.

Our findings indicate that patient narratives are used as an effective and versatile teaching tool in the two surveyed courses. Notably, both instructors incorporated stories in their classroom to teach decision-making and to illuminate real-world connections. Though the two courses are markedly different in student backgrounds and instructional models, there are strong parallels in their objectives. Both courses aim at helping students be able to make informed decisions based on knowledge and evidence. Stories are observed in the practice of the two instructors to achieve these teaching goals.