

# Using Learning Communities to Support Empathy in Medical Students

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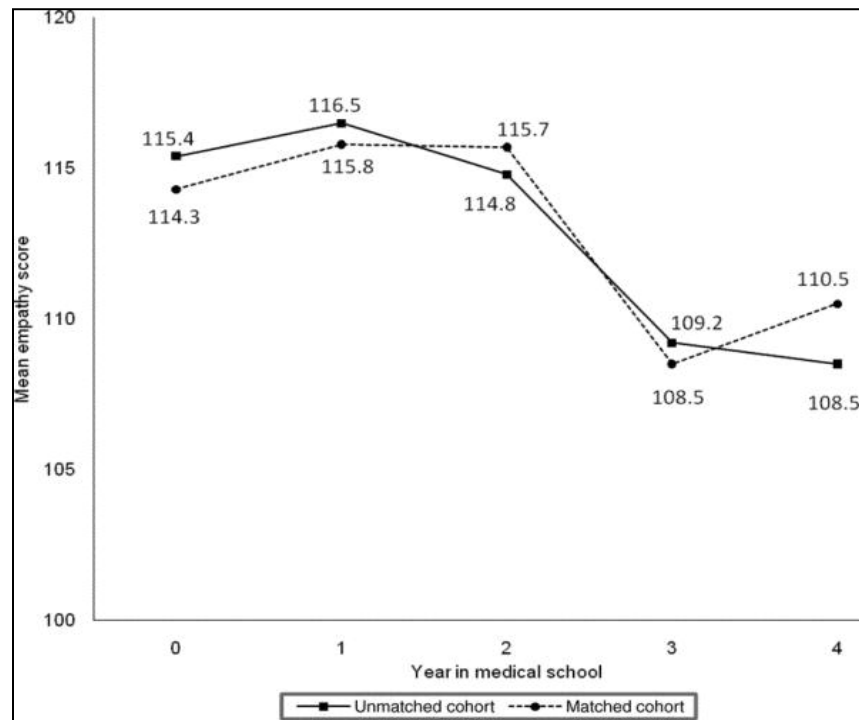
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# Empathy and Medical Students:

- Empathy definition: *cognitive* attribute that involves understanding patient suffering and concerns, combined with an ability to communicate this understanding and the intention to help
- Problem: Empathy may erode during medical school:

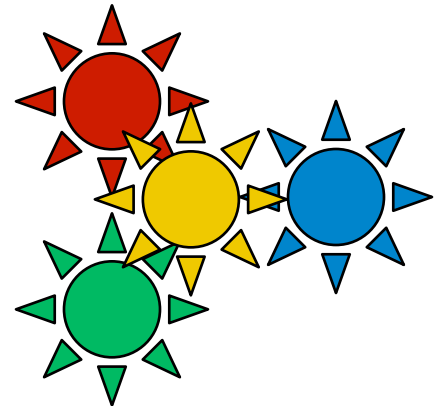


From:  
The Devil is in the Third Year:  
A Longitudinal Study of Erosion of  
Empathy in Medical School,  
Hojat, M. et al., 2009, Acad. Med.,  
84:1182.



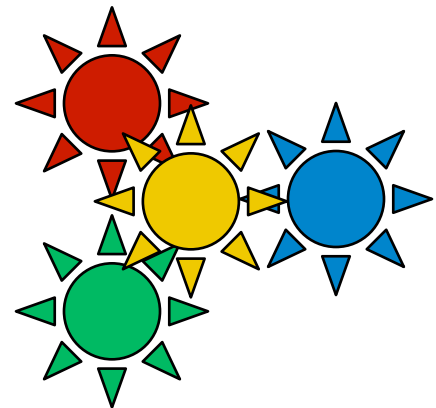
# Our Learning Communities – The Four Colleges at PLFSOM:

- First class (40 students) matriculated in 2009
- Current Class of 100 students divided into 4 Colleges  
(**Red, Blue, Green, Gold**)
- Each College has an MD and a PhD College Master
- Each College has student space (lockers, kitchen, etc.)
- College Masters' offices are convenient to this space



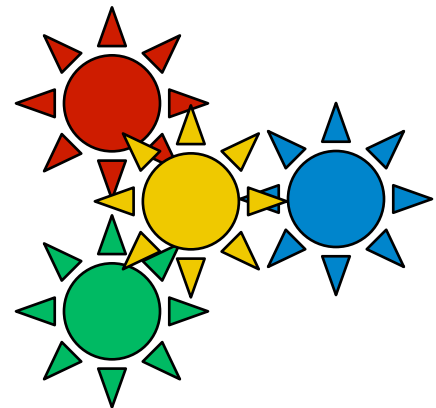
# Role of College Masters at PLFSOM:

- Student advocate and liaison between students/faculty
- Mentoring/career counseling
- Monitoring of academic performance/professionalism
- Oversee the College area
- Facilitate Masters' Colloquium Course




# Masters' Colloquium Course:

- Weekly 2-hour session
- Interactive/discussion format
- Multidisciplinary aspects of professional development, including critical thinking, communication, humanism, **empathy**, and ethics



# Clinical Presentation (CP) - Based Curriculum:

- No basic science discipline blocks
- Organ-based units
- Clinical presentation-based weeks
- Integration of clinical and basic sciences (and more!)

<b>Unit 3 Integumentary, Musculoskeletal, Nervous Systems – CP: Joint Pain</b>				
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>
<b>Clinical Scheme – Joint Pain</b>	<b>Inborn Errors of Metabolism (Biochemistry)</b>	<b>Conduction of Action Potential (Neuroscience)</b>	<b>Society, Community and the Individual (Medical Spanish)</b>	<b>Clinical Case Examples – Joint Pain</b>
<b>Cartilage Healing (Physiology)</b>	<b>Arthritis Drugs (Pharmacology)</b>	<b>Pathology and</b>	<b>Formative Exam</b>	<b>Masters’ Colloquium – Patient’s Experience of Chronic Disease</b>
<b>Pedigree Analysis (Genetics)</b>	<b>Action Potential (Neuroscience)</b>	<b>Immunology of MSK Disorders</b>	<b>Back and Leg Pain (Clinical Skills)</b>	 <b>TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY</b> <b>HEALTH SCIENCES CENTER</b> Paul L. Foster School of Medicine
<b>Lower Limb and Joints (Anatomy)</b>				

# Empathy and Masters' Colloquium:

- UME interventions can maintain/enhance empathy\*
- Masters' Colloquium uses a wide variety of sessions and assignments designed to support empathy:
  - Patient narratives and blogs
  - Drama (acting-in-role)
  - Simulations
  - Art and poetry
  - Reflective essays
  - Films

\*Reference:

Teaching Empathy to Medical Students:

An Updated, Systemic Review,

Batt-Rawden, S. A. et al., 2013, Acad. Med., 88: 1171.

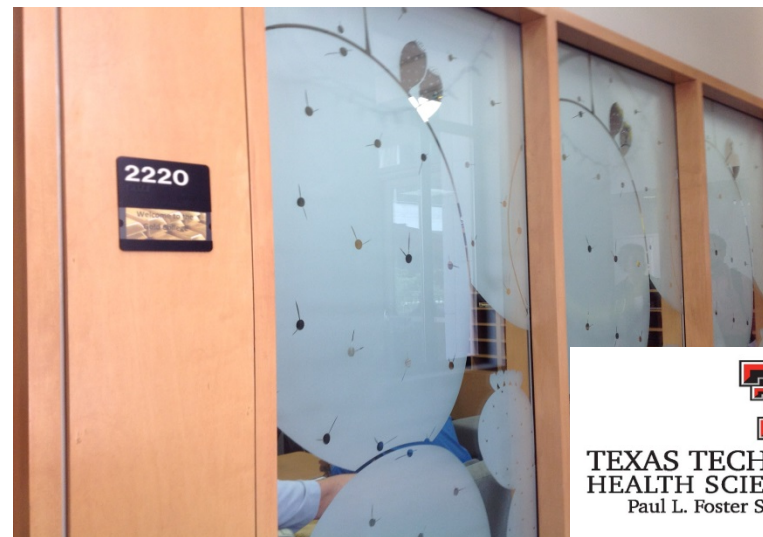


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# Longitudinal Study of Empathy at PLFSOM:

- Jefferson Scale of Physician Empathy (JSPE)\*
- Administered at start of MS1, MS2, MS3, MS4 years, and end of MS4 year

\*The Jefferson Scale of Physician Empathy-Student Version (JSPE-S) is a self-report 20-item instrument by Hojat et al., 2001, *Educ. Psychol. Meas.* 61:349. (Developed at Jefferson Medical College, now Sidney Kimmel Medical College, Philadelphia, PA)





# Lessons Learned:

- Mean scores are stable or increase MS1/MS2 years
- Mean scores still drop (somewhat) MS3/MS4 years

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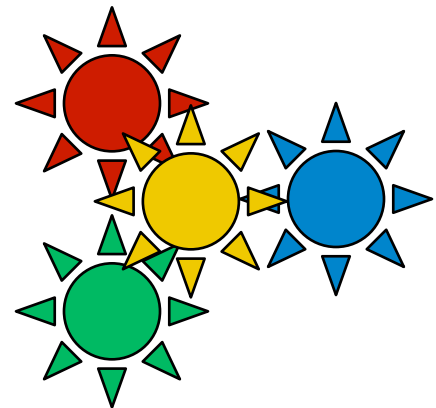
# Future Directions:

- MS3 year at PLFSOM now consists of three 16 week integrated blocks
- Two intersessions\* are now proposed

MS3 Year				
Block One Ob-Gyn/Peds	Block Two IM/Psych	Intersession	Block Three FM/Surg	Intersession

- Masters' Colloquium will be part of the intersessions

\*Intersessions will also revisit topics in the basic sciences, biostatistics and more



# Thank You Questions?

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