

Pearls for a Positive Learning Climate *

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*** *Now with 3 learning climate pearls!***



Objectives

1. Prioritize a positive learning climate as the foundation for learning
2. Use self-reflection to identify areas of learning climate improvement
3. Employ words and behaviors which positively impact the learning climate



Historical Context

Learning Climate

Pearls + Discussion

Learning Climate Pearls

- Show humility + memory
- Address - isms and bias
- Show interest in the human

First medical schools

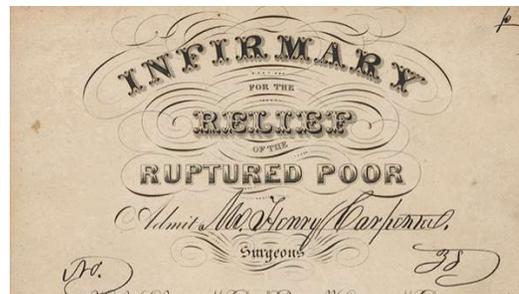
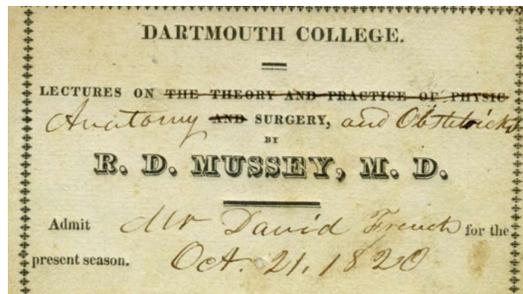
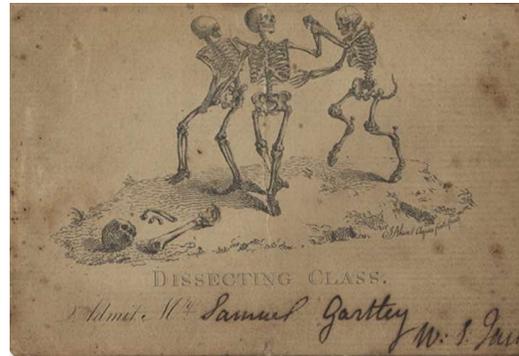
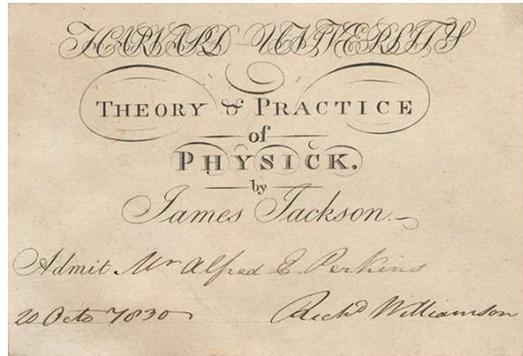
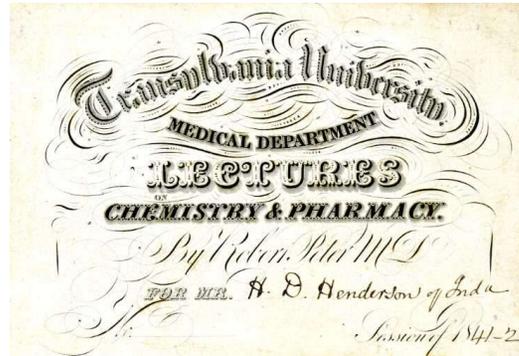
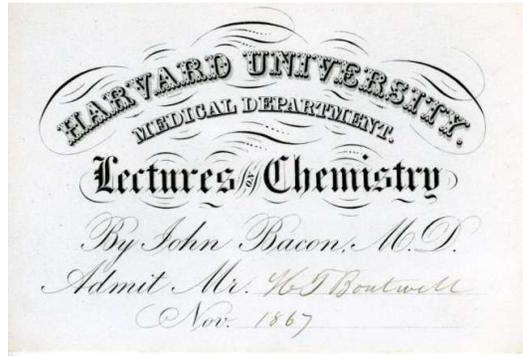
- 1765 - Medical Department of the College of Philadelphia
- 1768 - Medical Department of King's College in New York
- Bachelors → 2 years: pre-clinical, clinical
- Doctor of medicine → 3 more years, Latin thesis
- Closed 1776



John Morgan



Samuel Bard



Post-war

- 1783 – Harvard Medical School – Boston
- 1797 – Dartmouth - Vermont
- 1799 – Transylvania University - Kentucky

1800's - Rapid change

7 M → 40 M

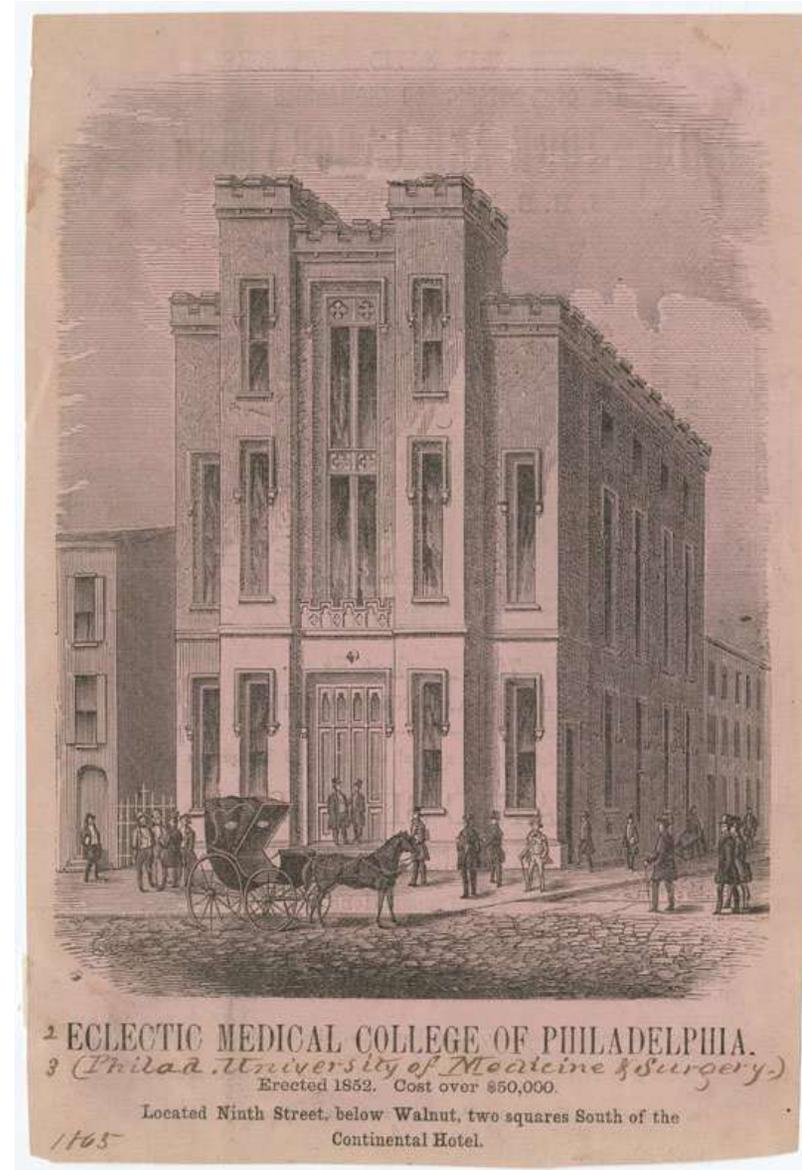
Hospitals; 3 → 149

Med schools; 7 → 150

“Proprietary Medical Schools”

Diploma Mills

https://www.librarycompany.org/shadoweconomy/section7_5.htm



Learn how to teach???

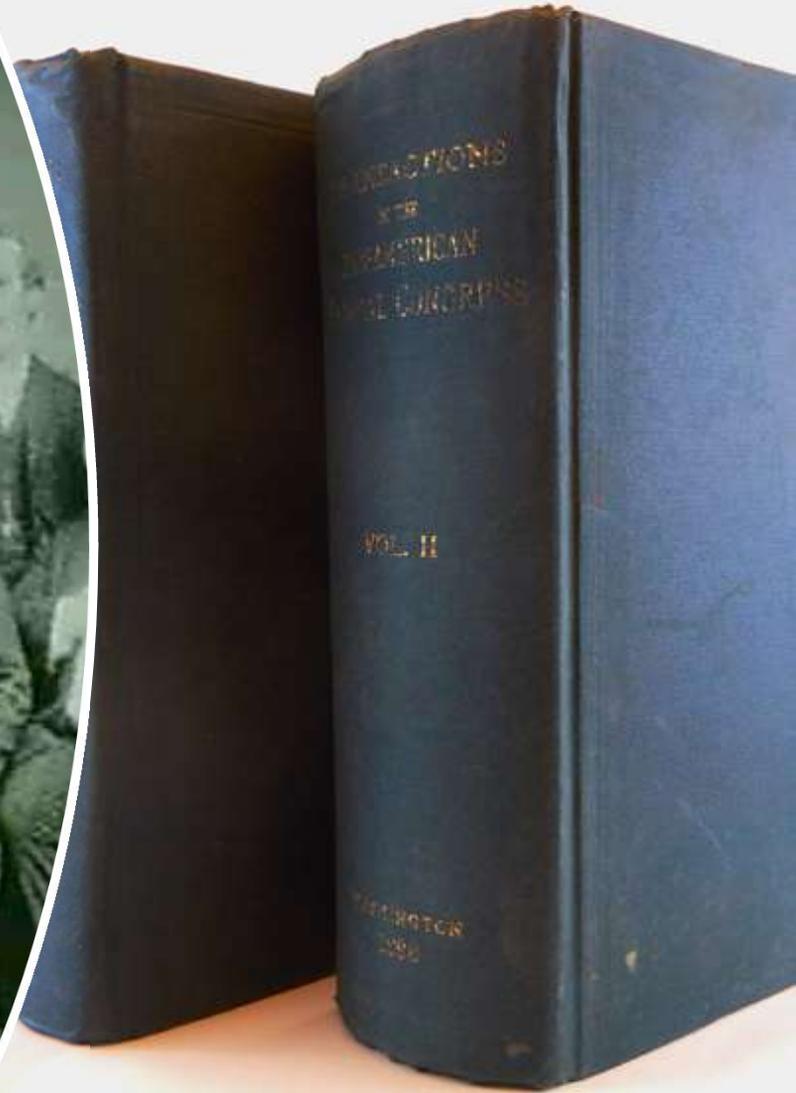
“The time has come when the *art of medical teaching* must be taught ... whoever may choose to become a teacher of medicine, let him **first learn how to teach**.

The idea seems to have been grasped by the ... Pan American Medical Congress ... this is notice to **platitudinous addle-pates** that the old-fashioned dissertation on “higher medical education” may be left on the dust covered shelf.”

Platitudinous addle-pates?

<https://www.biomedrarebooks.com/>

<https://www.artnet.com/artists/mathew-brady>



1910 - Flexner Report

- Visited 155 medical schools
 - Increased entrance standards
 - University affiliations
 - Importance of research
- # med schools → 76
- Hist Black medical schools 5 → 2

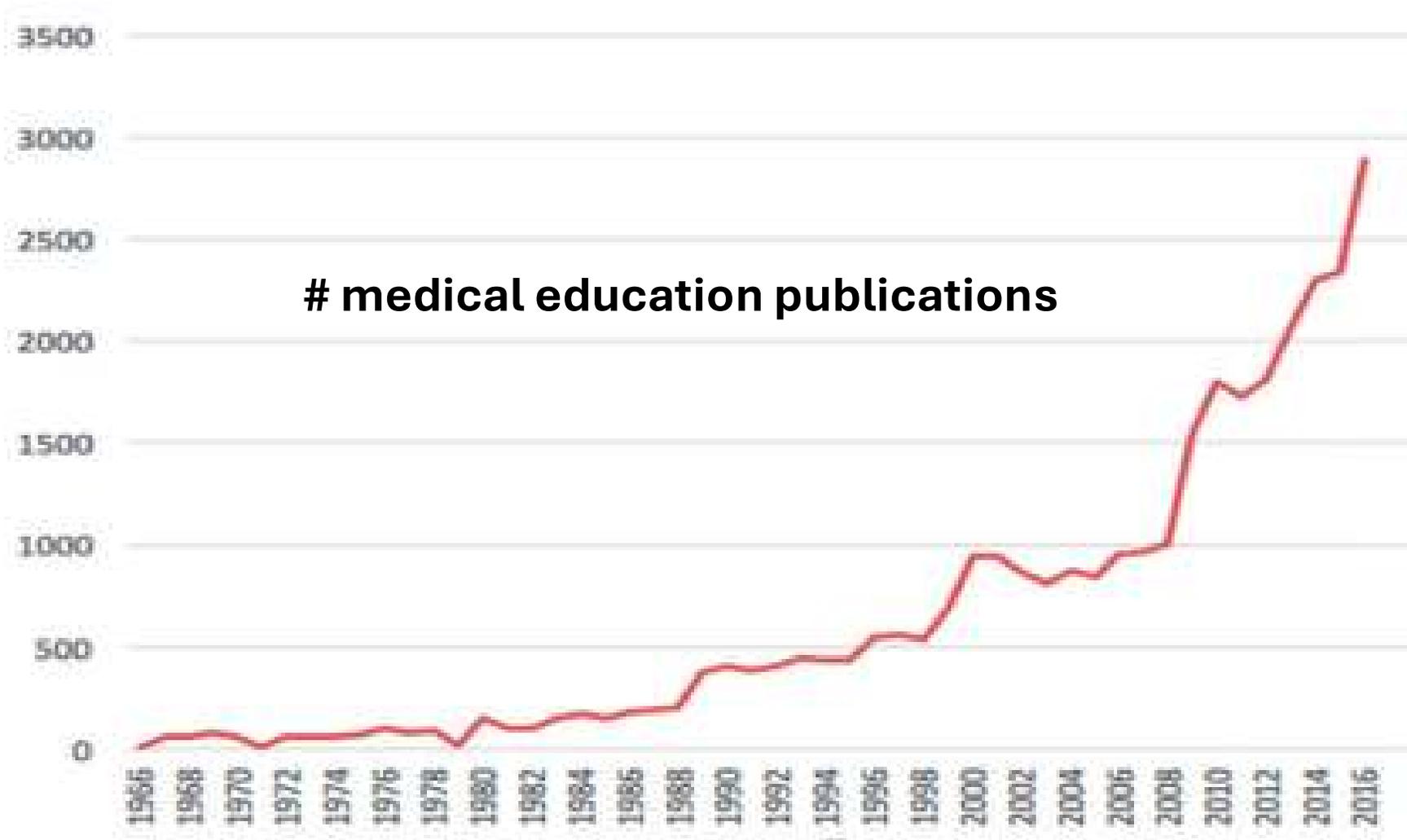
Year	% of population Black	% of doctors Black	Life expect: Black / White
1900	12%	1.3%	33 / 48
1940	10%	2.8%	53 / 64
2018	13%	5.4%	75 / 79



Abraham Flexner

The World's Work, July 1910

Ly, D.P. JGIM, 2022



Jason, Medical Teacher 2018

Emergence of “learning climate”

- Student – teacher relationship is important
- Learning is an emotional experience
- Teacher attitudes matter
- Feeling accepted is important
- Enthusiasm is critical

Key Concepts

Learning climate

- Complex psycho-social-physical construct
- Co-created by individuals, social groups and organizations
- Teachers have a strong influence

Psychological safety

- You can be yourself
- Can participate w/o fear of ridicule
- Safe to make mistakes

Top 3%

Positive affect → achievement (each vein met)

32 male U of Michigan 3rd year medical students

15 difficult anagrams

Control group (n=14): told to judge difficulty of the task

Experimental group (n=18): solve anagrams, told they were in the top 3%

Clinical task: Asked to decide which of 6 patients more likely to have lung cancer

- Came to a diagnosis more efficiently
- Considered alternative diagnoses and treatments – more thorough
- Kept working with the provided materials

Positive affect → achievement



44 Internists - randomized

Candy

Control

Humanistic statements

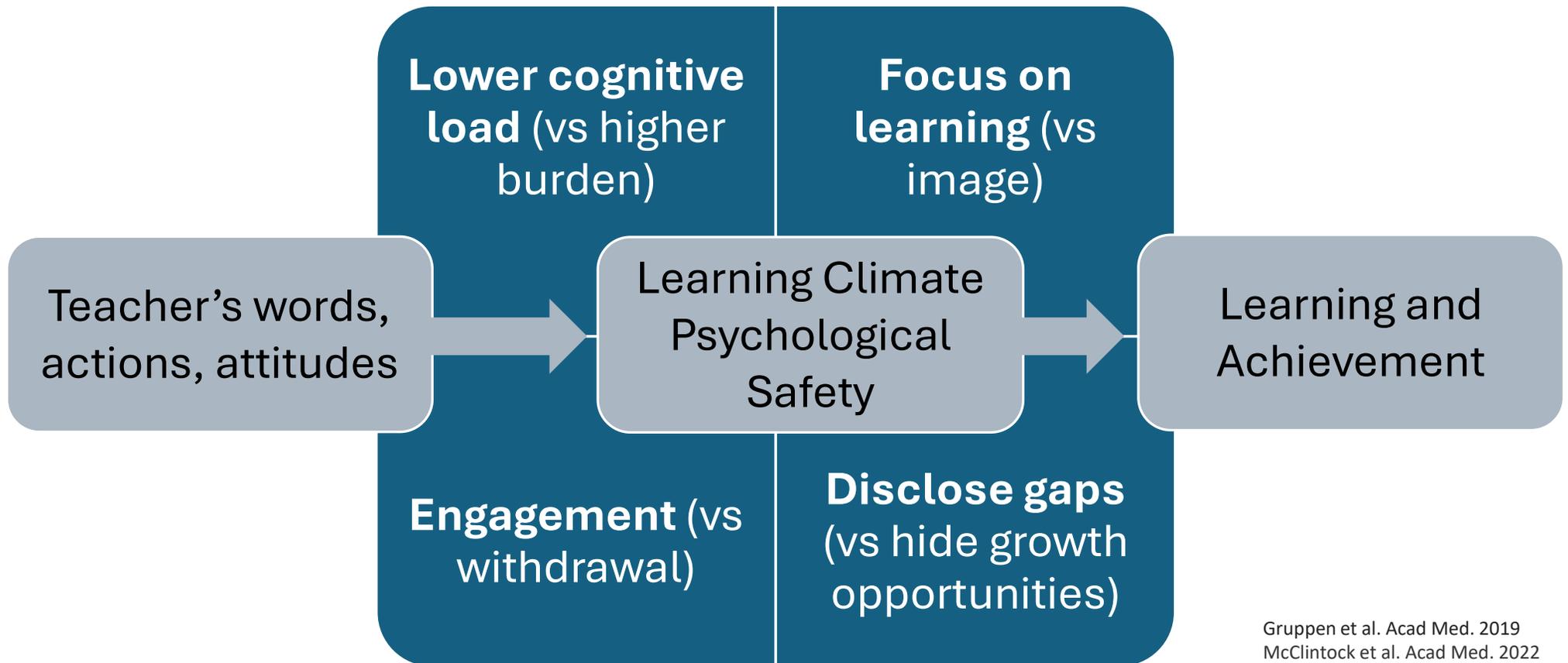
Clinical task:
Talking through a patient presentation of chronic active hepatitis

Transcript analysis

- Generated correct hypothesis more quickly
- Organized and integrated information more quickly
- Less anchoring

(Organ Beh and Hum Dec Proc 1997; Vol 72 No 1, pp 117 – 1135; Canva AI Image)

Summary



Gruppen et al. Acad Med. 2019
McClintock et al. Acad Med. 2022
Carmona-Halty et al Curr Psychol. 2021.

Learning Climate Pearls

- Show humility + memory
- Address - isms and bias
- Show interest in the human

Show humility + memory

- “Openly discussing mistakes they have made in their early career created a culture of learning rather than a fear of making mistakes.”
- “If attendings can try to get in that headspace again - the anxiety of being in a new space, not having any clue how things work”

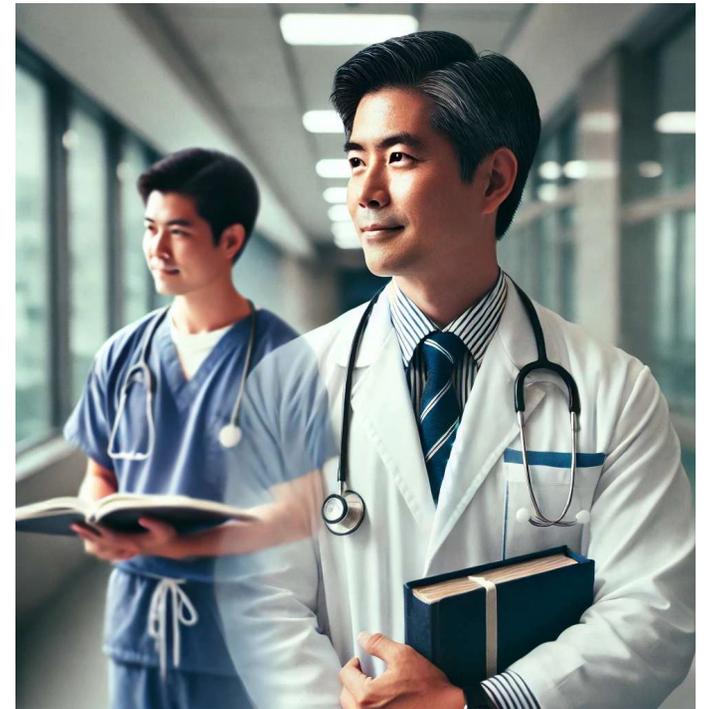


Image credit: OpenAI. 2025. AI-generated image of a physician reminiscing about medical school. DALL·E.

Show humility + memory

- “I remember one attending talked about how it really does suck sometimes to be a medical student - it was just a relief to hear that from my preceptor, because it told me in that moment that they get it.”
- “Having humility, trying to minimize hierarchy, allowing space for discussion, so students, residents and attendings can all contribute.”

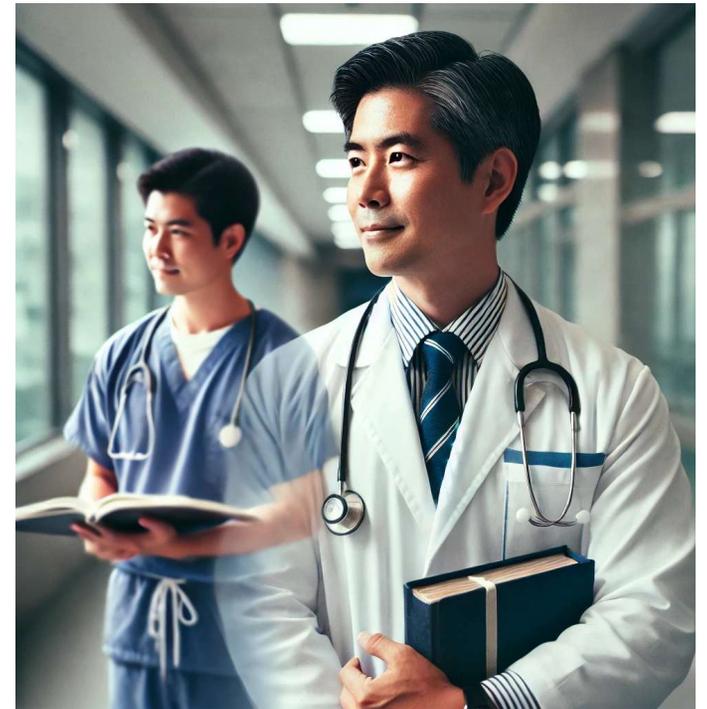


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Show humility + memory



Question:

When is the last time you demonstrated memory + humility to your learners?

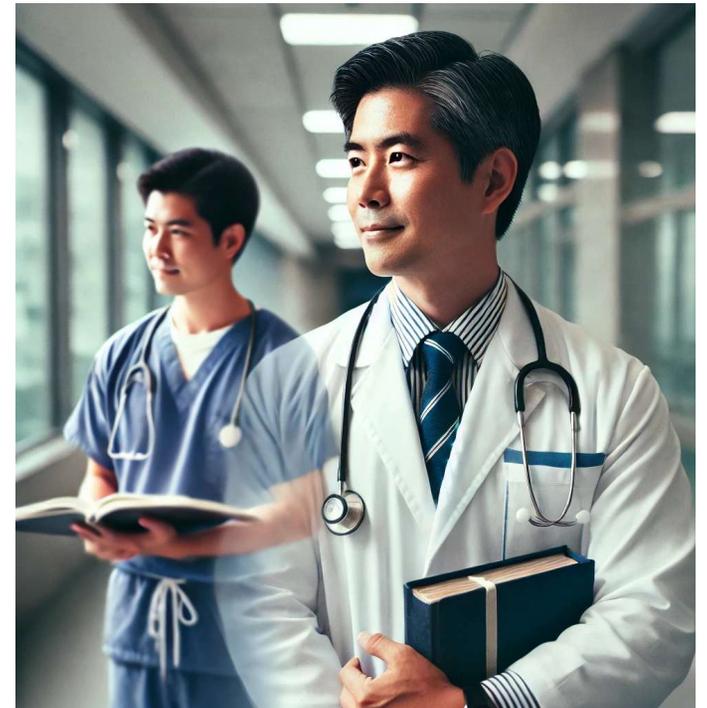


Image credit: OpenAI. 2025. AI-generated image of a physician reminiscing about medical school. DALL·E.

Address -isms and Bias

- Reports from my students (over and over)
- Reflections on my own words and behaviors
- Significant issue identified at UW SOM, across country



Address -isms and bias → *Before*

- “I’d like to discuss how we might approach racism, other -isms and biases
- This is something I discuss with ***all the students and trainees*** I work with.”
- “My philosophy is *humans* come first.”
- “Any thoughts on responding in these situations?”
- “It would be great to debrief afterwards if possible.”

Possible options to respond in the moment:

- Look to me
- Interrupt, “I’m surprised to hear you say that.”
- Re-direct and proceed “Let’s focus on your care...”
- Leave the room (+/- “When I come back we’re going to just focus on your care”)

Address -isms and bias → *During and after*

During

- Make sure the patient is safe (don't stop chest compressions, keep holding pressure etc)
- Carry out the plan
- Almost always better to say something than nothing

After

- Don't make assumptions about the learner experience
- Debrief with permission
- Learn how you could have been more effective

“But how will they learn to deal with these things???”

- By being supported by Attendings who uphold human dignity
- By being respected
- By being taught by strong role models
- By experiencing greater psychological safety



Image credit: OpenAI. 2025. AI-generated image of scales of justice in hospital room. DALL-E.

Three attendings who tried it out

“They were surprised that I was able to address this topic so openly and transparently with them.”

“The students I worked with were pleasantly surprised and appreciative to have this discussion with me.”

“... the learner appreciated the openness to a discussion. We revisited a couple experiences that he had, **which I was not aware of ...**”



Address -isms and Bias



Question:

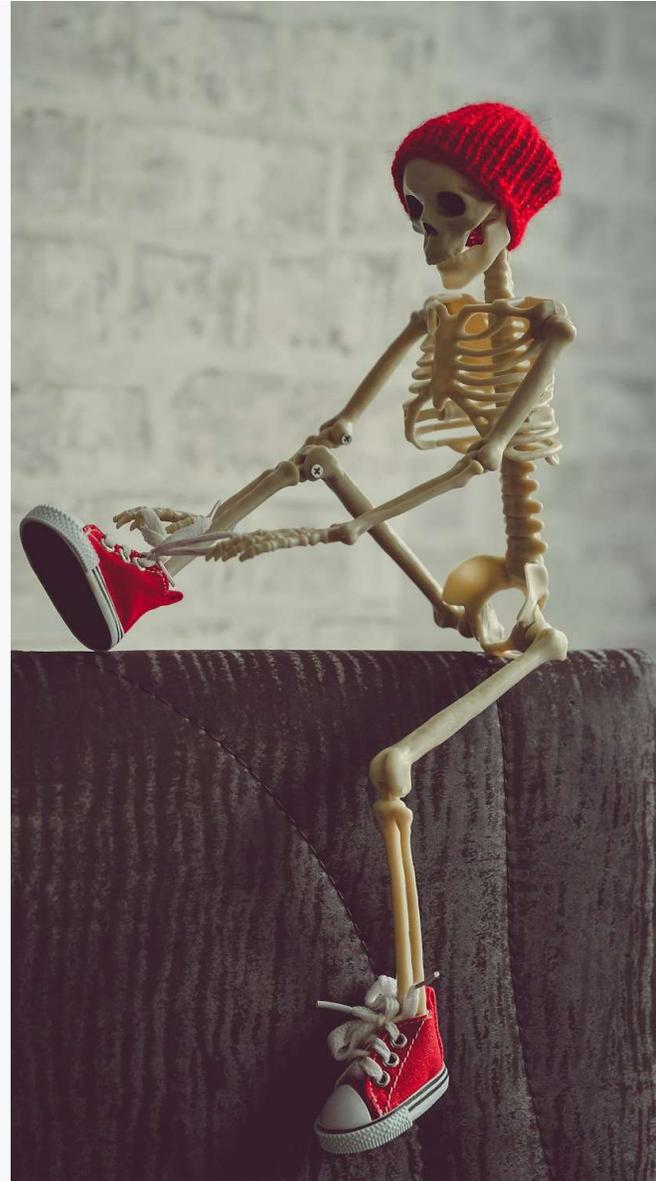
Do you say something about the potential occurrence of -isms and bias to your learners?



Show interest in the human



- “Being curious about students as people.”
- “Acknowledging when a student is showing emotion, showing that you care about their wellbeing.”
- “Asking about how my weekend went.”
- “Providing encouragement, expressing belief in the student, expressing belief that the student will be a great doctor.”

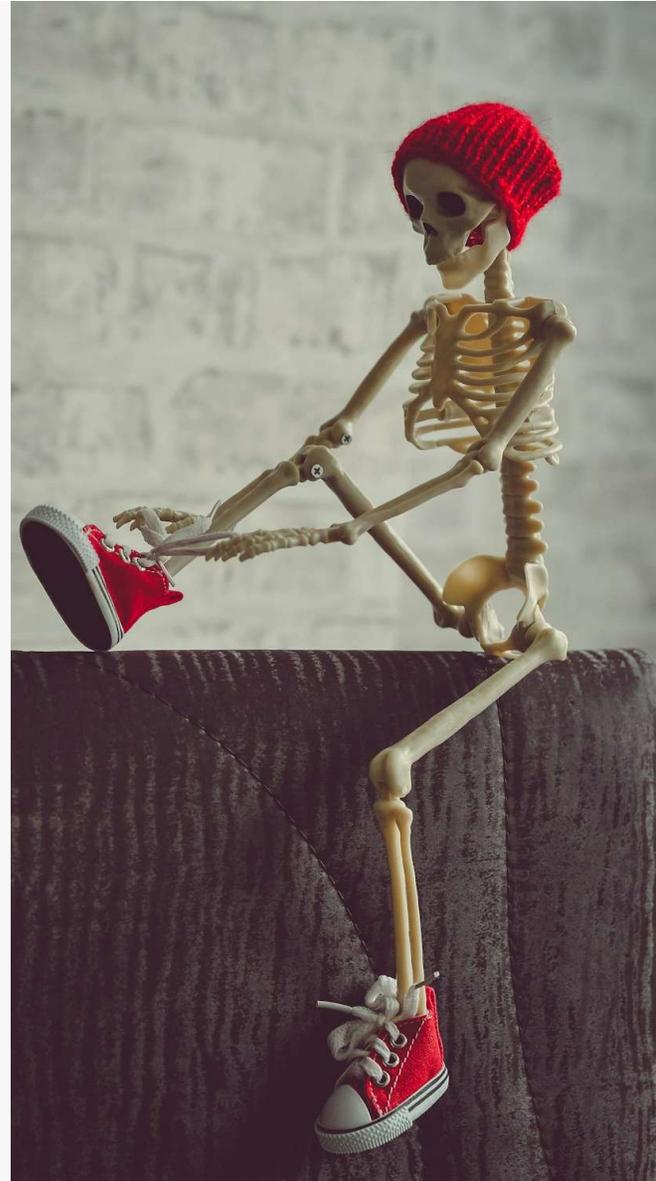


Show interest in the
human



Question:

What is a pitfall in “showing
interest in the human – and how
do you avoid it?”



Learning Climate Pearls

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Educator Career Development

CLIME Teaching Scholar's Program

White Paper Conference: Teaching Portfolio

CLIME Educator Network

Community Building

Conversation Café Series

CLIME Grand Rounds

CLIMEcasts

CLIME Together Symposium

Educational Research

Small Grant Program

Works in Progress Series

Teaching Skills

CLIME / Stern Partnership Workshops

Clinical Teaching Certificate Programs



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Sign up for CLIME communications!!!

... how do I teach when I don't have enough time?

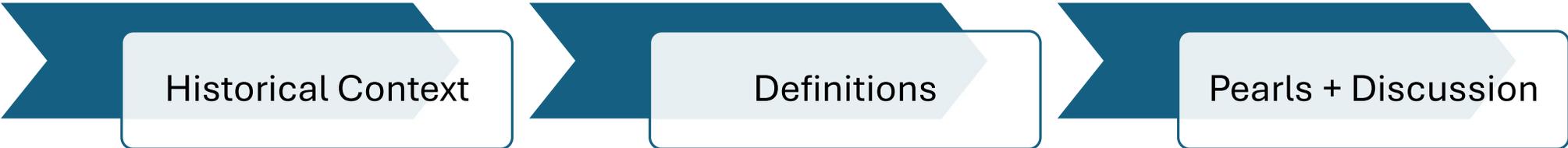
... how do I connect with folks when their training is so different than what I went through?

... how can I better help prepare my students and residents to be doctors?

... how can I be a more effective teacher?

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Historical Context

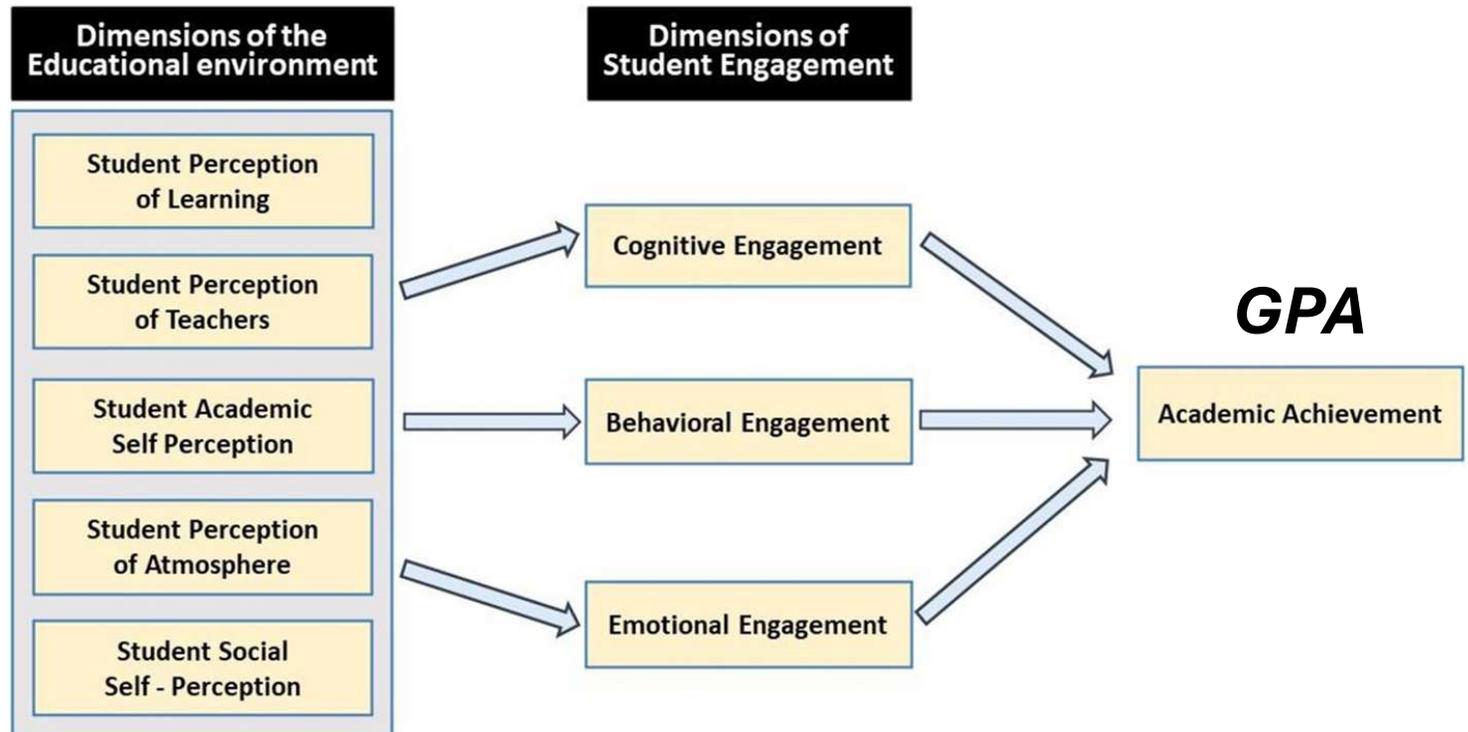
Definitions

Pearls + Discussion

Positive Environment → Engagement → Achievement

DREEM inventory - Dundee Ready Education Environment Measure

University Student Engagement Inventory



- Private University in UAE
- Students from 77 countries
- Medicine, Dentistry, Pharmacy, Health Sciences, Nursing, and Healthcare Management and Economics
- 554 / 892 students (62%), 75% female

Definitions

Platitudinous

- dull and tiresome
- with pretensions of significance or originality

Addle pate

- someone with a muddled or confused mind
- eccentric

