

# Designing and Implementing a Health Humanities Longitudinal MS4 Elective



DONALD AND BARBARA  
ZUCKER SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
AT Hofstra/NORTHWELL

Innovative Changes Incorporated in the Medical and/or Nursing School Curricula to Increase Humanism

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*Scientific evidence is important, but it is only one source of information and one thread in a patient's tapestry, a tapestry that includes many other fabrics and hues. Within this larger and more complex picture, it is listening and observing a patient's story of self and its construction that must remain at the center of our work.* Anand Gunawardana

## Background

### Humanities in Medical Education

- Use of humanities content in American medical education has been debated for well over 60 years.
- Medical humanities remains a curricular orphan, unable to find a lasting home in medical education & training.
  - Its inclusion remains unstandardized
  - Barriers to the integration of humanities include time and space in an already overburdened curriculum
  - Lack of consensus on the exact content, pedagogy and instruction.

### The Health Humanities (HH)

- Focuses on the ways we absorb, interpret, and respond to stories in literature and other forms of art, offering a model centered on physicians' relationships with their patients, colleagues, society, & themselves.
- Students need skills to support resilience & maintain their ability to connect with patients and other health professionals, while also taking care of themselves.
- Even though a degree of consensus exists that HH needs to be (re)introduced into medical education, the question still arises as to how?

## Intervention

### I. Course Objectives

- Synthesize clinical experiences into coherent narratives by creating written reflections.
- Cultivate compassion, empathy & respect for diverse social & cultural perspectives, while sharing patient stories.
- Collaborate and communicate effectively as part of a supportive peer group.
- Practice written reflection as a sustainable method to promote personal & professional development & to foster resilience.

### II. Course Logistics

**Narrative Perspective and Reflective Writing:** A Longitudinal Elective in Health Humanities for MS4 Students

- 20 required sessions from June until March
- 2 hours face to face at a central location or remotely.

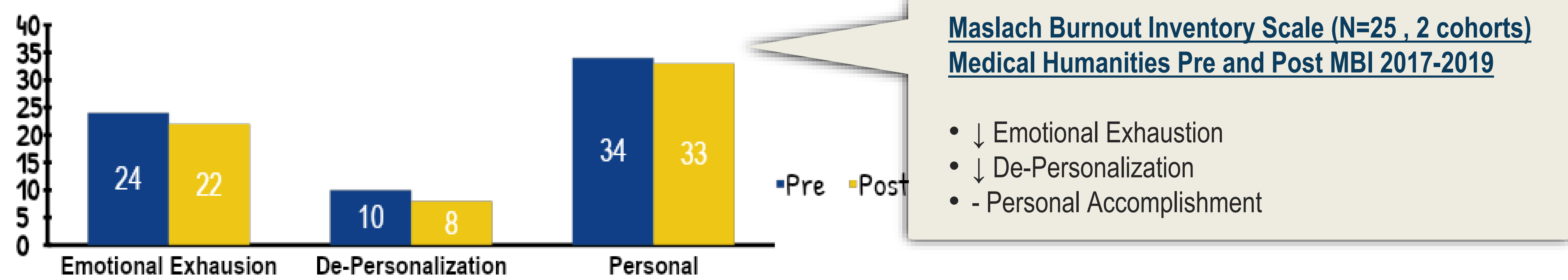
### III. Diverse Faculty

- Physicians (MD/DO)
- Chaplains
- Nurse Practitioners (NP)
- EdD/Ph.D
- Art Educator

### IV. Course Content

- Art / Museum
- Music
- Poetry
- Stories
- TED talks
- Graphic Novels
- Books

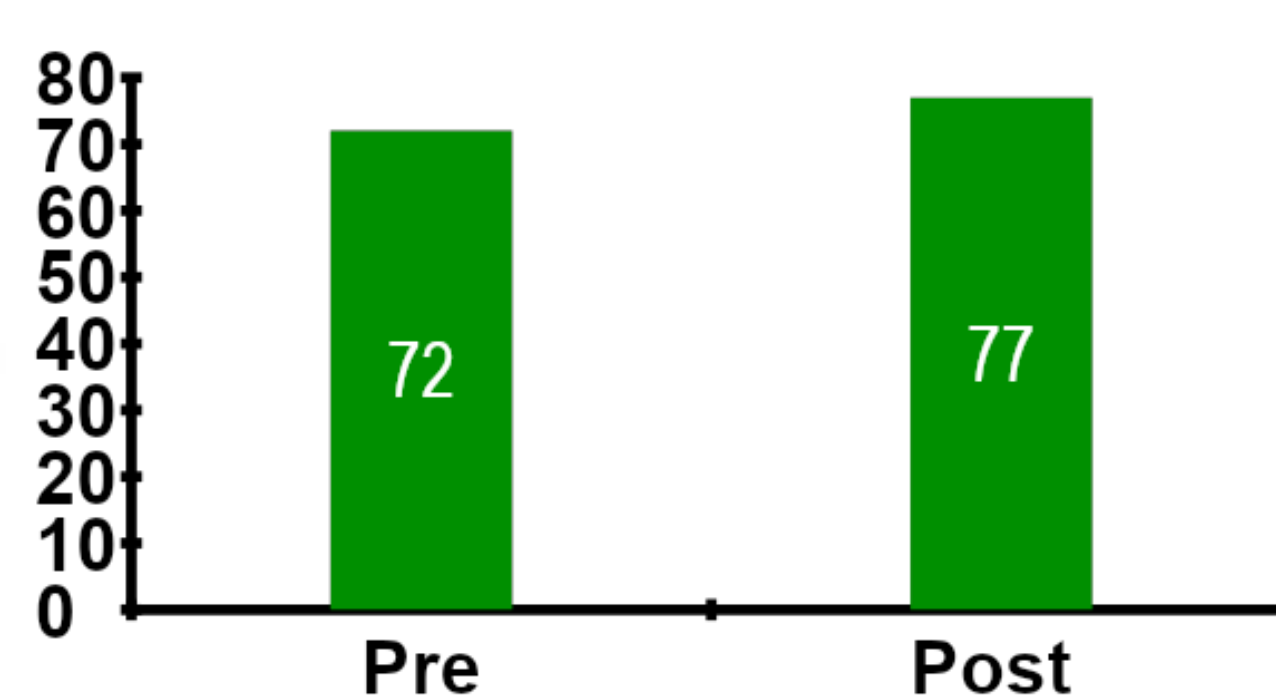
## Results



Subscale	Frequency
High	27 or over
Moderate	17-26
Low	0-16

Subscale	Frequency
High	13 or over
Moderate	7-12
Low	0-6

Subscale	Frequency
High	0-31
Moderate	32-38
Low	39 or over



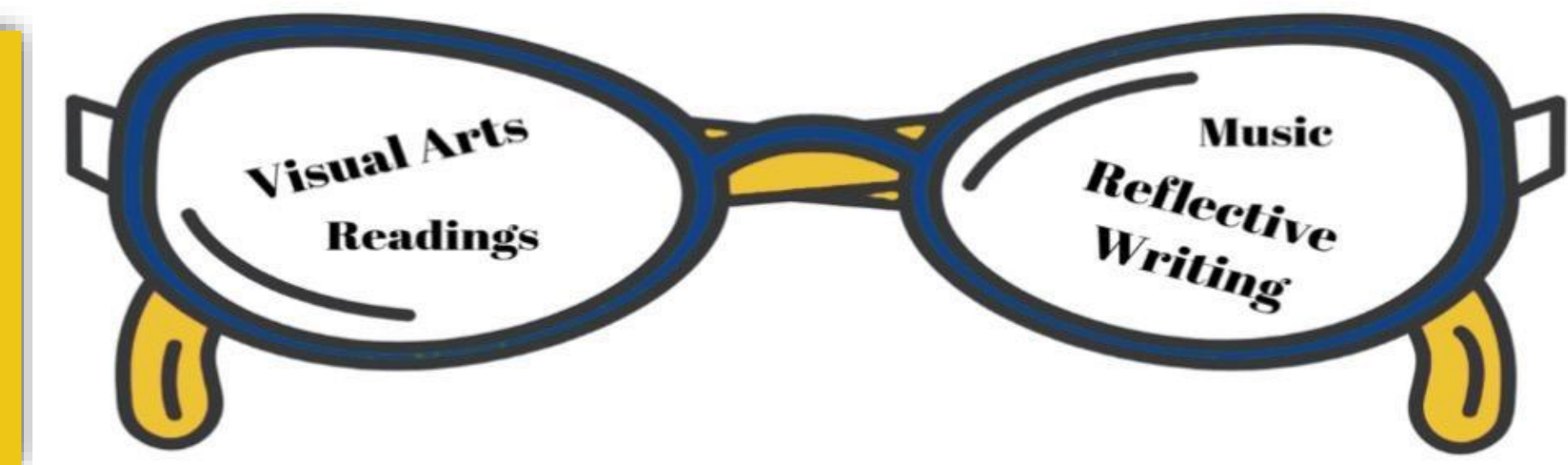
**Connor Davidson Resilience Scale (N=25, 2 cohorts) Medical Humanities Pre and Post MBI 2017-2019**

- ↑ Resilience

## Goal

To develop student's capacities for continuous reflection & improvement by creating a community of practice for the learners and faculty.

Through the Lens of Health Humanities readings, visual arts, music and reflective writing. **Students will:**



- Honor patients' stories by seeking to understand their perspectives about the impact of illness on their lives.
- Practice effective communication skills by building and sharing coherent narratives.
- Work to locate themselves within their own stories and those of others, students will learn to more effectively process their clinical experiences and practice reflections as a skill for meaning-making and self-understanding throughout their careers.

## Student Evaluation

"Stated Expectations Met" - 100% (N=25) YES  
Overall Course Rating: 4.5/5



## Faculty Evaluation

Did this course meet faculty expectations?  
YES (N=9)



## Conclusion

- Longitudinal electives are successful in final year if flexible with all logistics
- Faculty form a special interest group (SIG) focused on HH
- Faculty with this interest will volunteer time & effort to join
- Health Humanities (HH) can frame learning specific to health, illness & professional identity formation.



### Take Away Message

A Health Humanities Elective in final year of medical school can influence GME and CPD based on students' positive experience and outcomes