

# Assessing the Learning Environment at the University of Michigan Medical School Through a National Collaboration

R. Brent Stansfield, Ph. D., Susanne Engelmann, M.D., Jennifer Christner, M.D., Sally Santen, Ph.D., Larry D. Gruppen, Ph.D.  
The University of Michigan Medical School

## The Learning Environment Study

The University of Michigan is one of 28 medical schools in the US and Canada that are part of the Innovative Strategies for Transforming the Education of Physicians (ISTEP) at the American Medical Association.

The Learning Environment Study (LES) examines the undergraduate medical education environment as a longitudinal survey using many established measures of student attitudes, personalities, and perceptions.

University of Michigan has 122 students participating in the class of 2014 and 109 in the class of 2015; participation rates of 81% and 73% respectively.

Here are some measures gathered during students' first year of medical school.

## Participants

	Class of 2014	Class of 2015
number:	122	109
female	51%	52%
non-white	42%	39%
from rural/small town	27%	30%
have a physician in the immediate family	36%	31%
at orientation, felt more than adequately prepared for medical school	75%	72%

## Discussion

There is a lot of diversity in participants' attitudes and perceptions

Tolerance for ambiguity and the ways of coping subscales have very wide variance

Overall, students have high empathy scores and are only slightly patient-oriented

Overall, students perceive the University of Michigan Medical School positively.

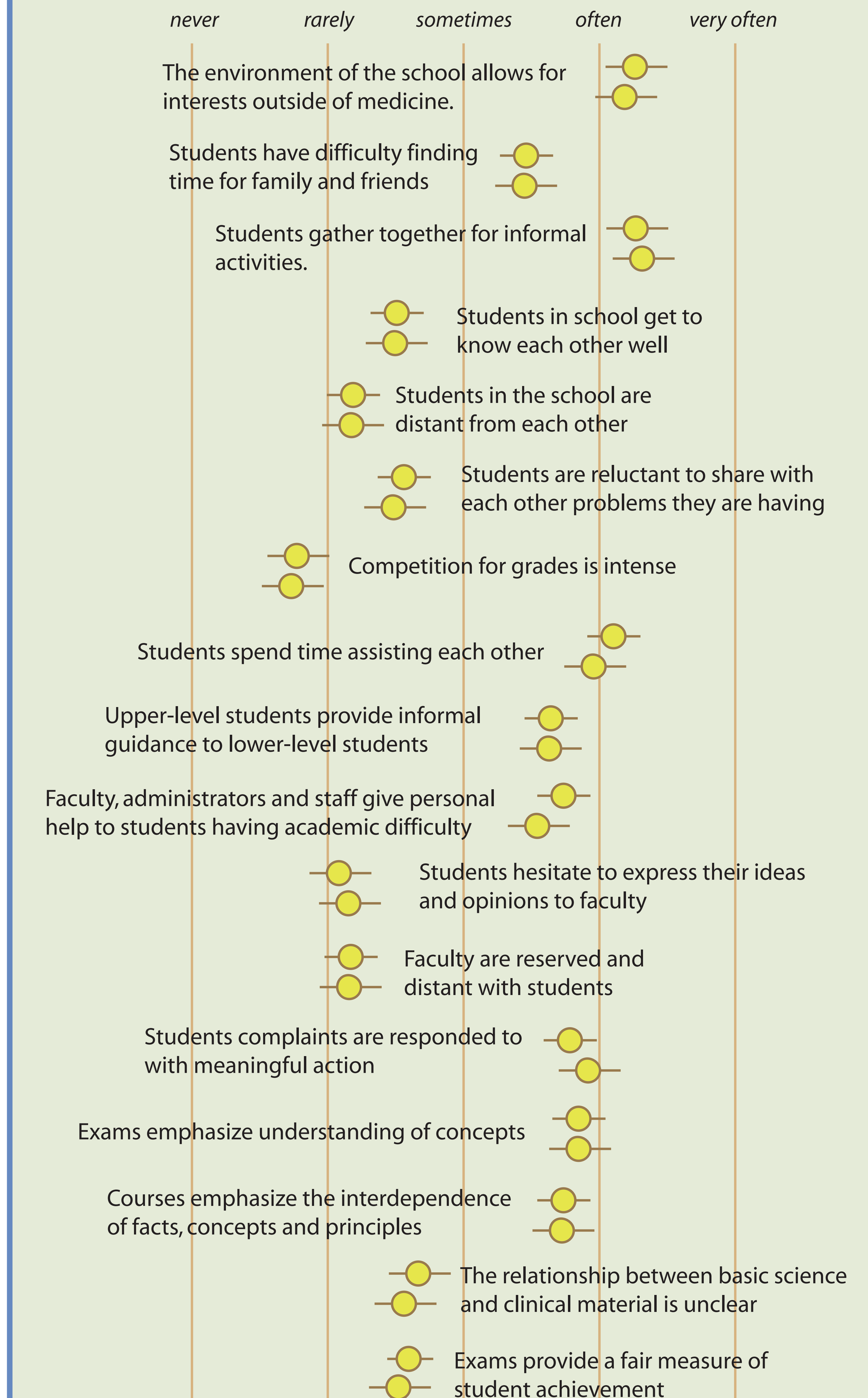
Students don't feel they get to know each other well but they oftenspend time assisting each other

Students feel negatively about the clinical relevance of material and fairness of assessments

The Learning Environment Study will continue to follow these students to explore which aspects of medical school are most beneficial for which sorts of students.

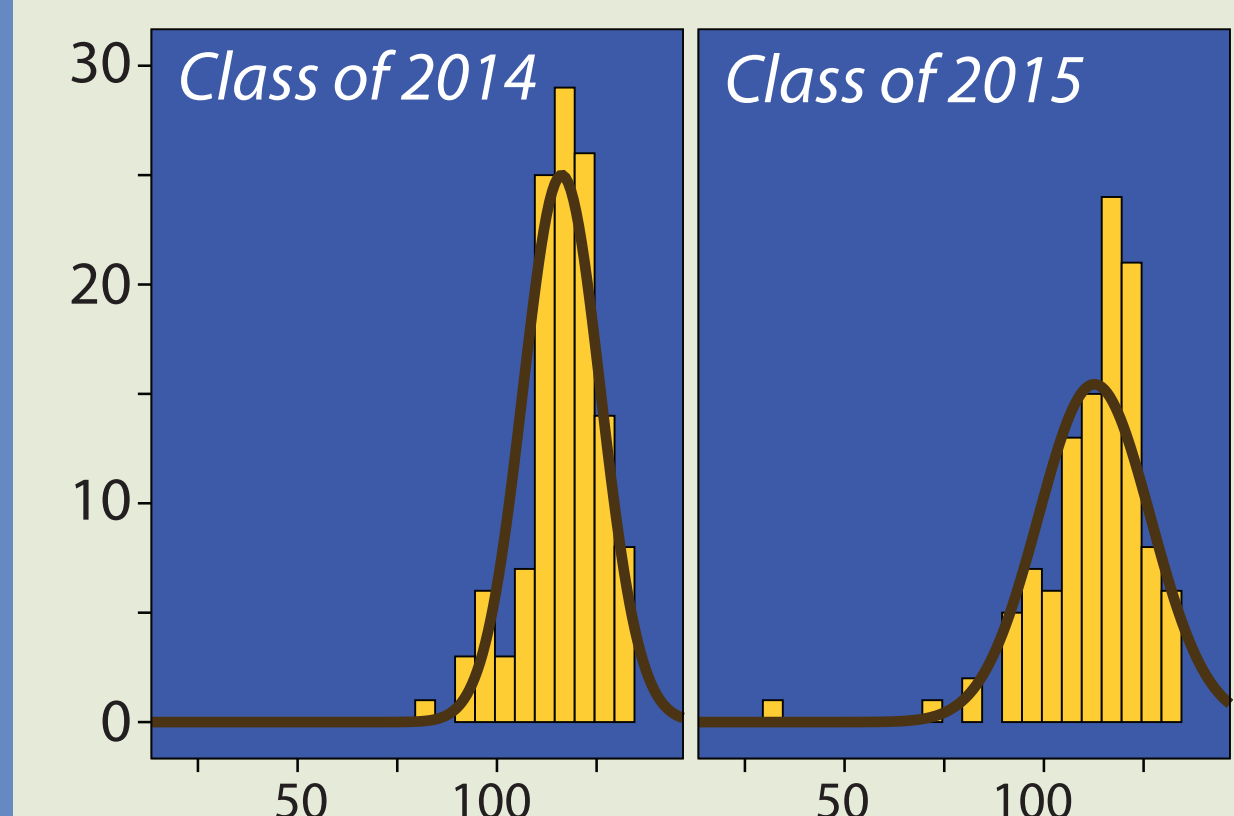
These results will be compared with other medical schools to give a better picture of how to improve the learning environment to facilitate clinical learning with less distraction and stress.

## The Medical School Learning Environment Survey



## Measures

### The Jefferson Scale of Physician Empathy

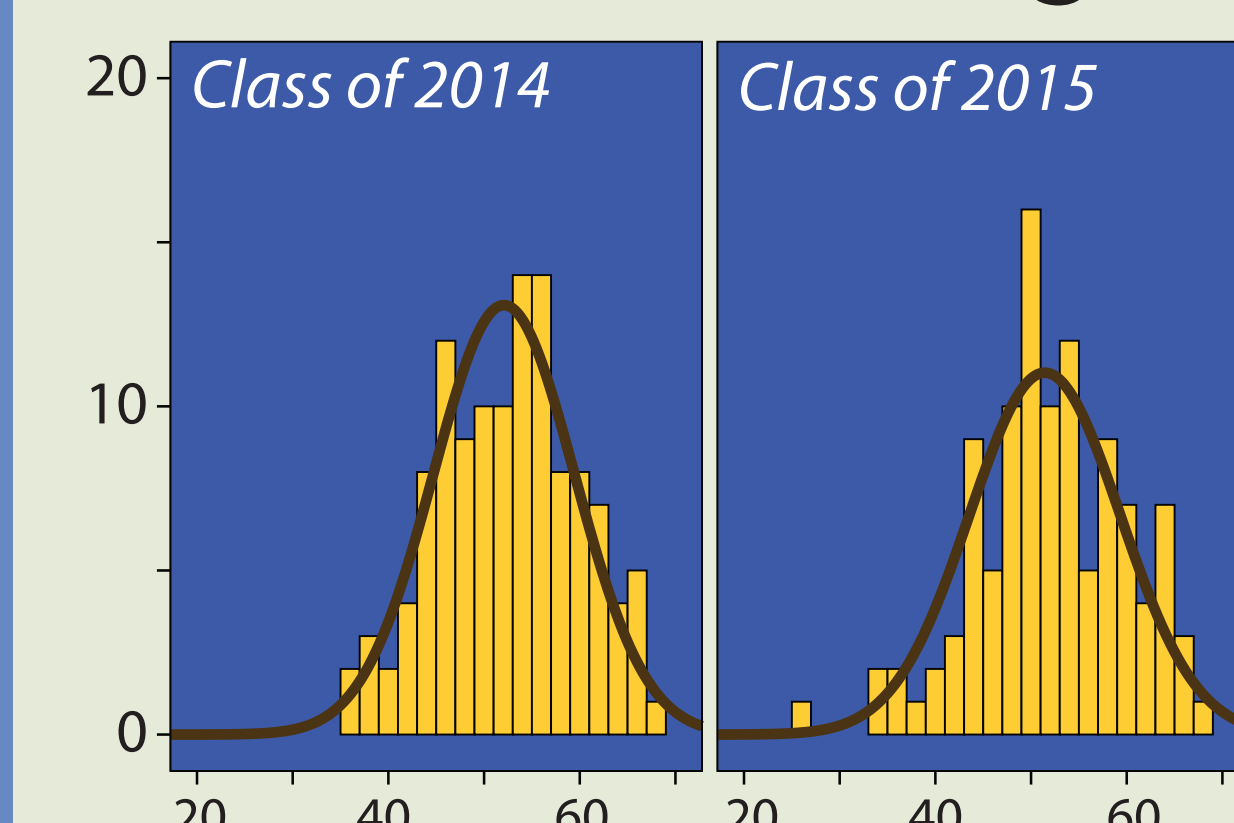


The S-Version of the JSPE measures how much a student believes that attention to patients' thoughts and emotions is an important part of clinical skill and effective treatment.

Scores can range from 20 to 140

Higher scores indicate more belief that patients' thoughts and emotions are clinically relevant.

### Tolerance of Ambiguity Scale

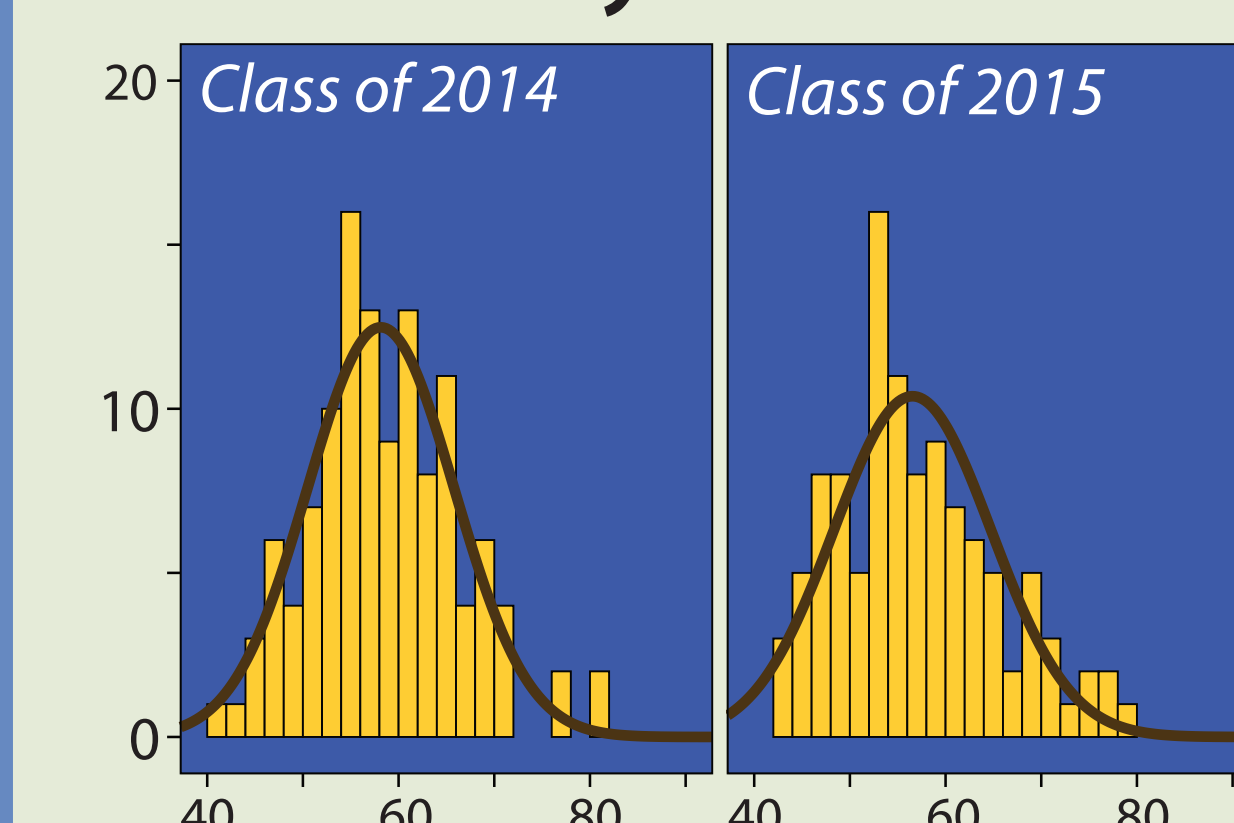


The TAS measures how comfortable a student is with open situations and goals involving adaptation, ambiguous or undefined goals, and no correct answer.

Scores can range from 16 to 112.

Higher scores indicate more comfort with ambiguous situations and tasks.

### Patient-Physician Orientation Scale



The PPOS measures how much the student feels a patient should direct and control a clinical interaction.

Scores can range from 18 to 108.

High scores indicate disagreement that the doctor should control clinical interactions.

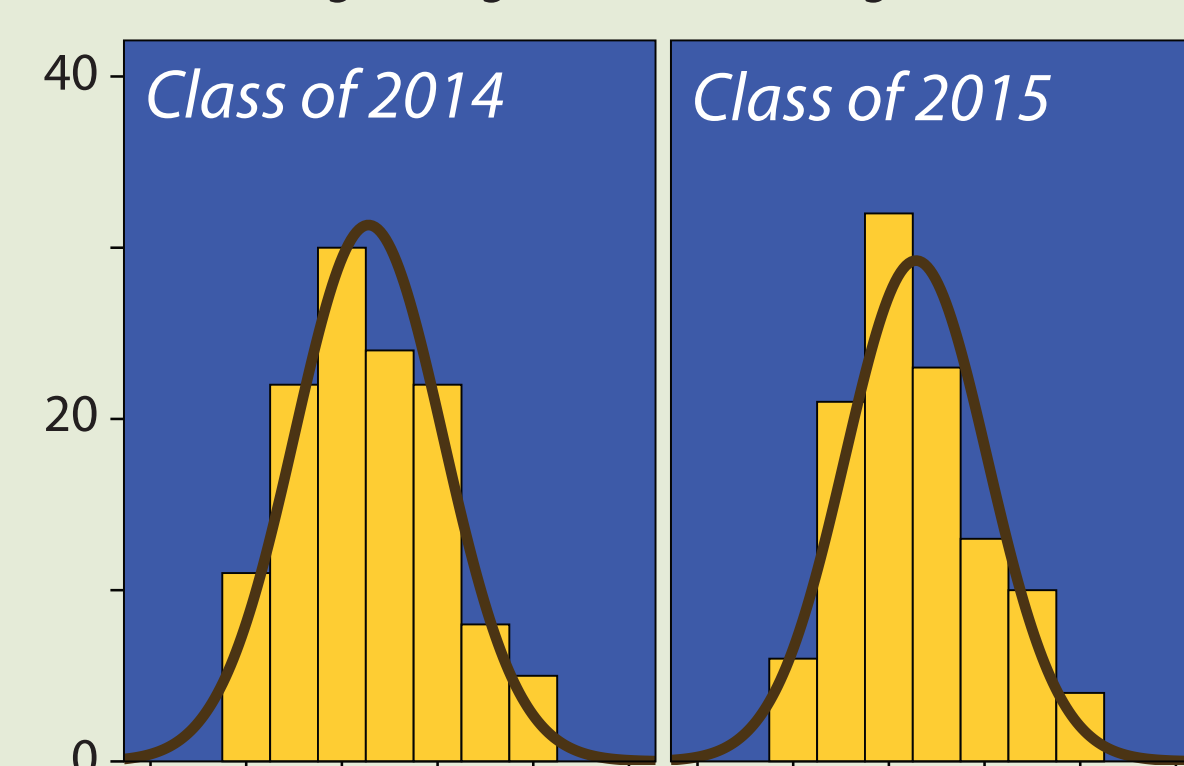
### Ways of Coping Scale

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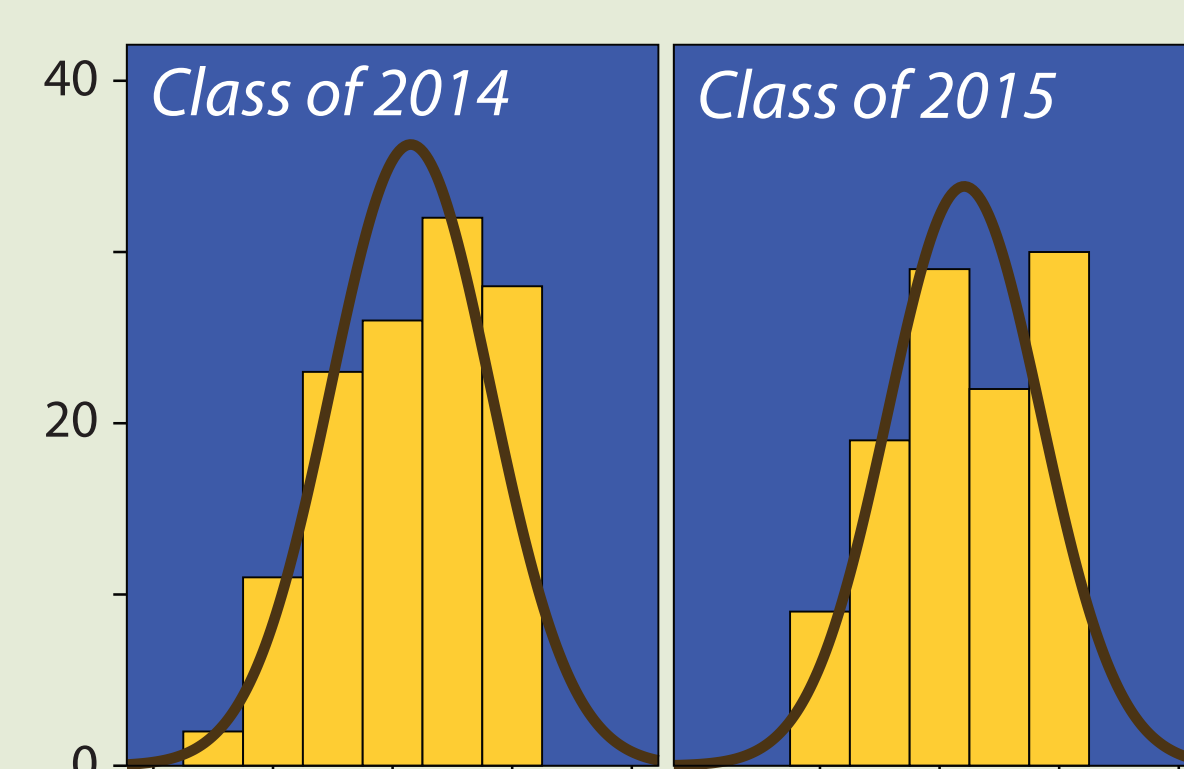
#### self controlling:

Preventing feelings from influencing the situation



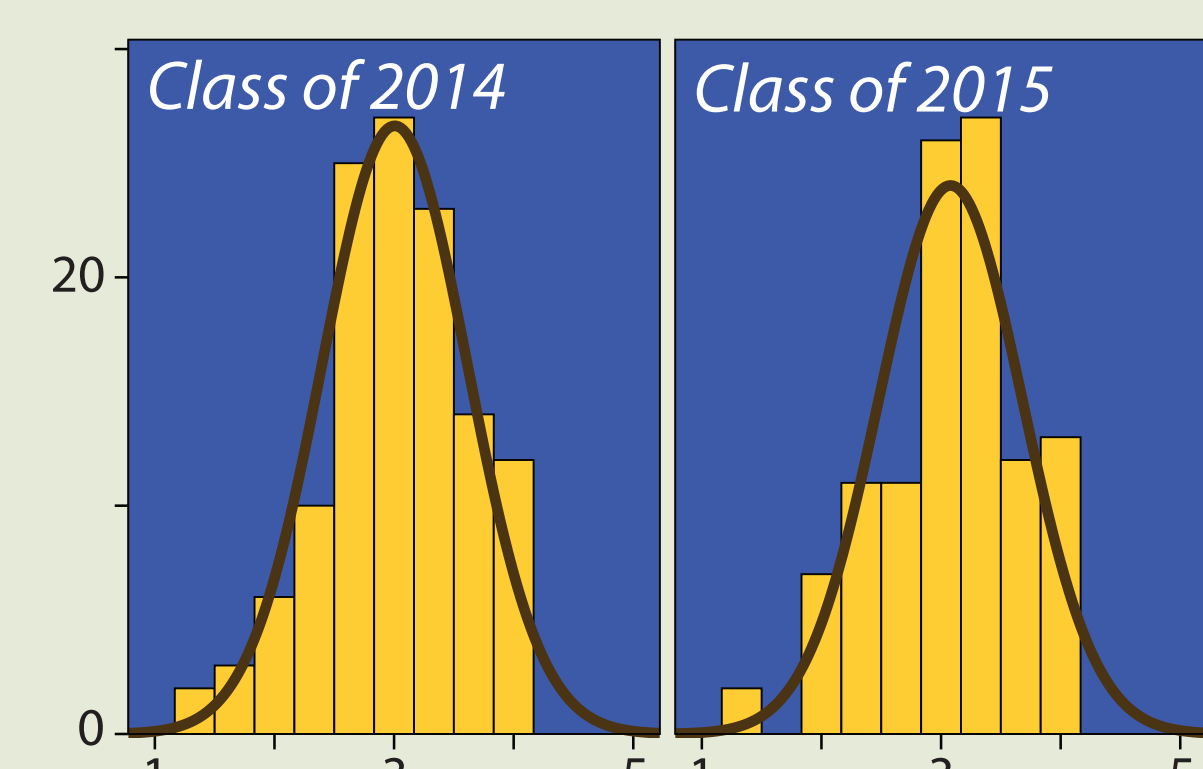
#### planful problem-solving:

Deliberate, conscious action



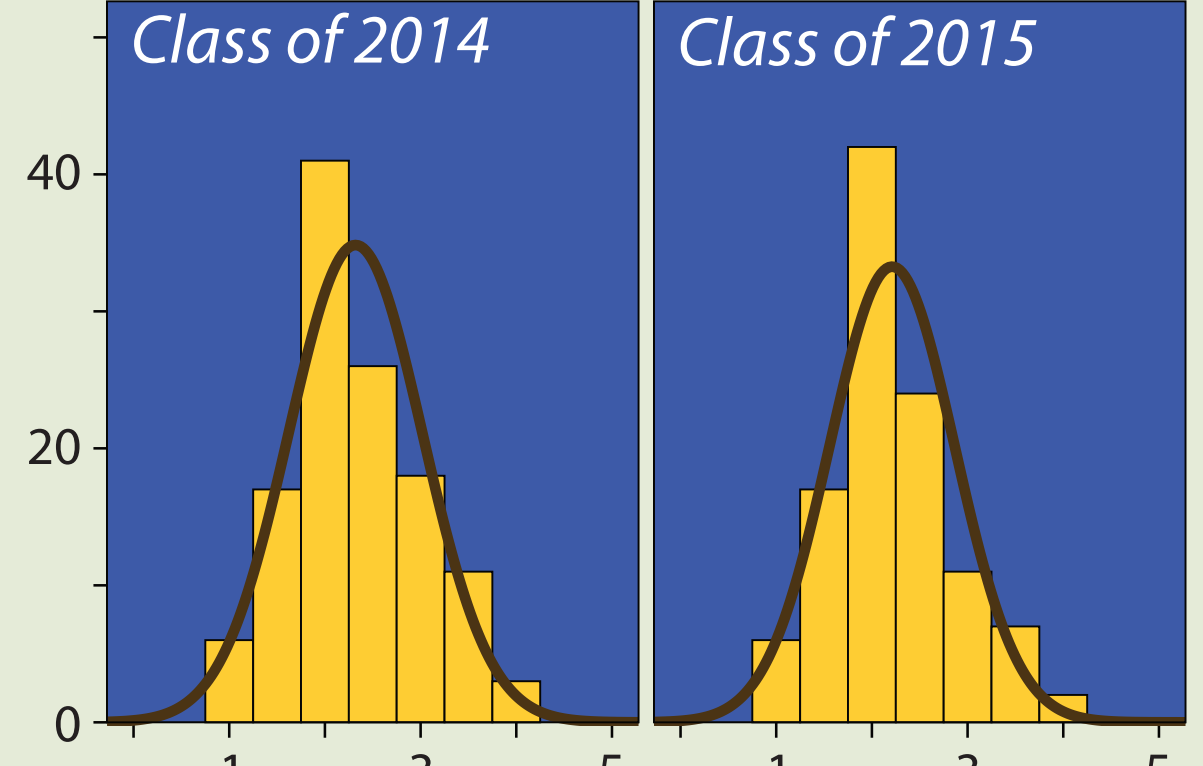
#### confrontive coping:

Aggressive, proactive manipulation of the situation



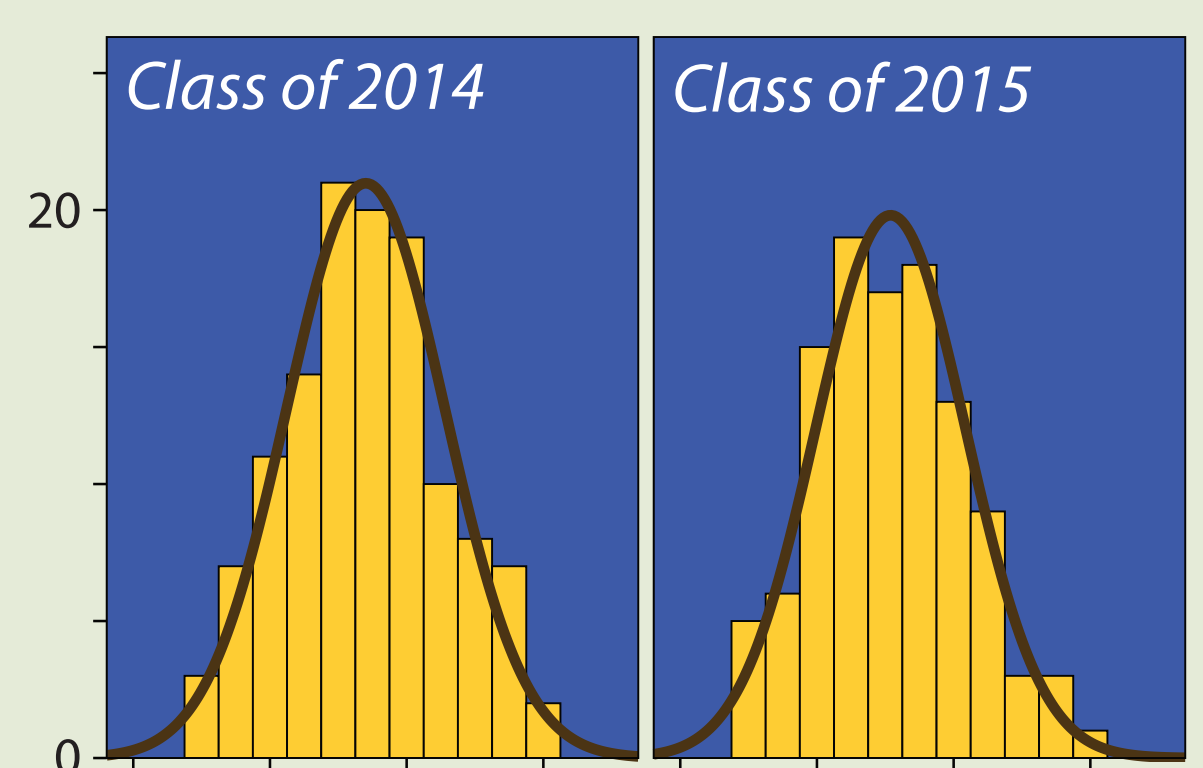
#### accepted responsibility:

Acknowledging one's own role in the situation



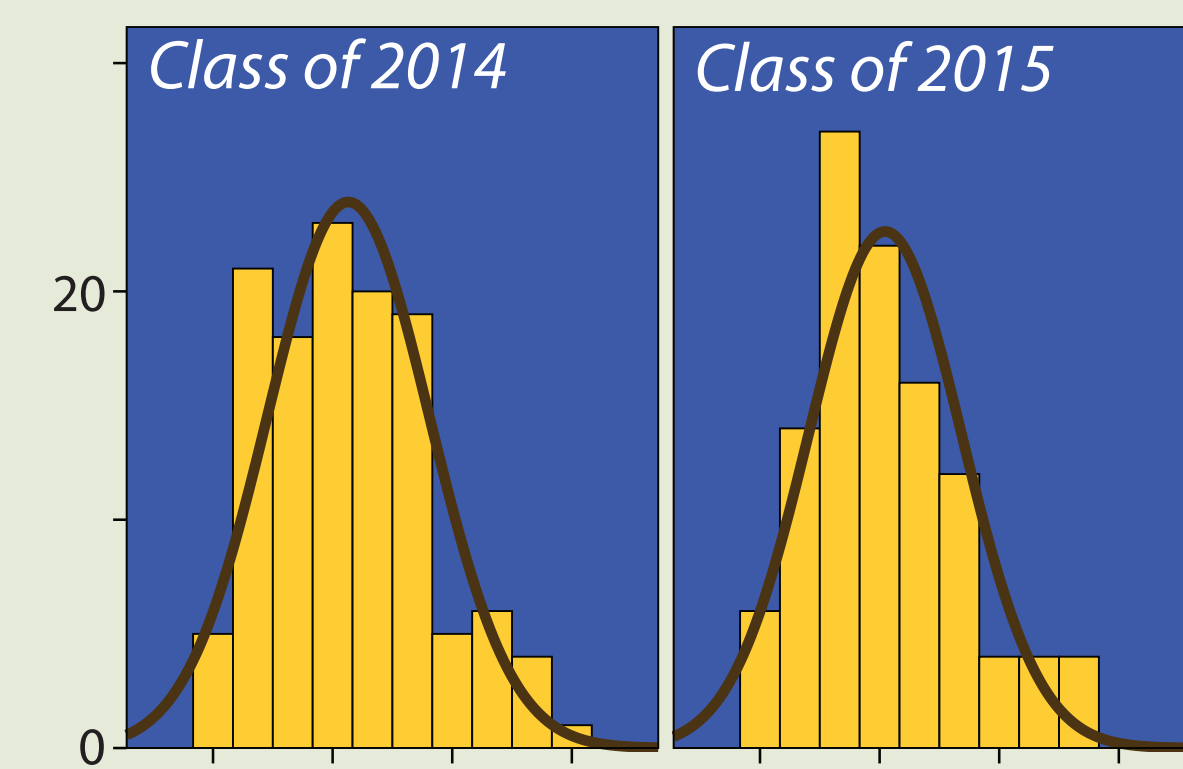
#### positive reappraisal:

Thinking of the situation as personal growth



#### escape avoidance:

Hoping things will turn out fine



#### seeking social support:

Gathering information from other people

