

From theory to practice: Applying a conceptual framework to guide teaching and promotion of primary care in medical school.

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Introduction

The Primary Care Unit (UIGP) at the Faculty of medicine in Geneva has developed its teaching and research activities in recent years, with the aim to promote primary care in undergraduate medical education. The purpose of this study was to apply a conceptual framework of primary care career choice to our practical context.

Our objectives were:

- to analyse the current state of primary care teaching, and
- to define areas for improvement and further development,

by analysing our role within the system of influences on career choice and our actions on the students' process of career choice development.

Methods

We conducted group sessions with teaching members of UIGP and UDREM. We mapped out current teaching activities and discussed strengths and weaknesses, with regard to research findings about the promotion of primary care in medical education. On the basis of the conceptual framework, we discussed how our teaching could influence students' career choice development. We also identified ways to act on external influences.

For a detailed description of our conceptual framework of medical students' primary care career choice, please refer to the following publication: Pfarrwaller et al, Academic Medicine 2017;92:1536-42.

Results

1 Our Unit's role within the system of influences on career choice:

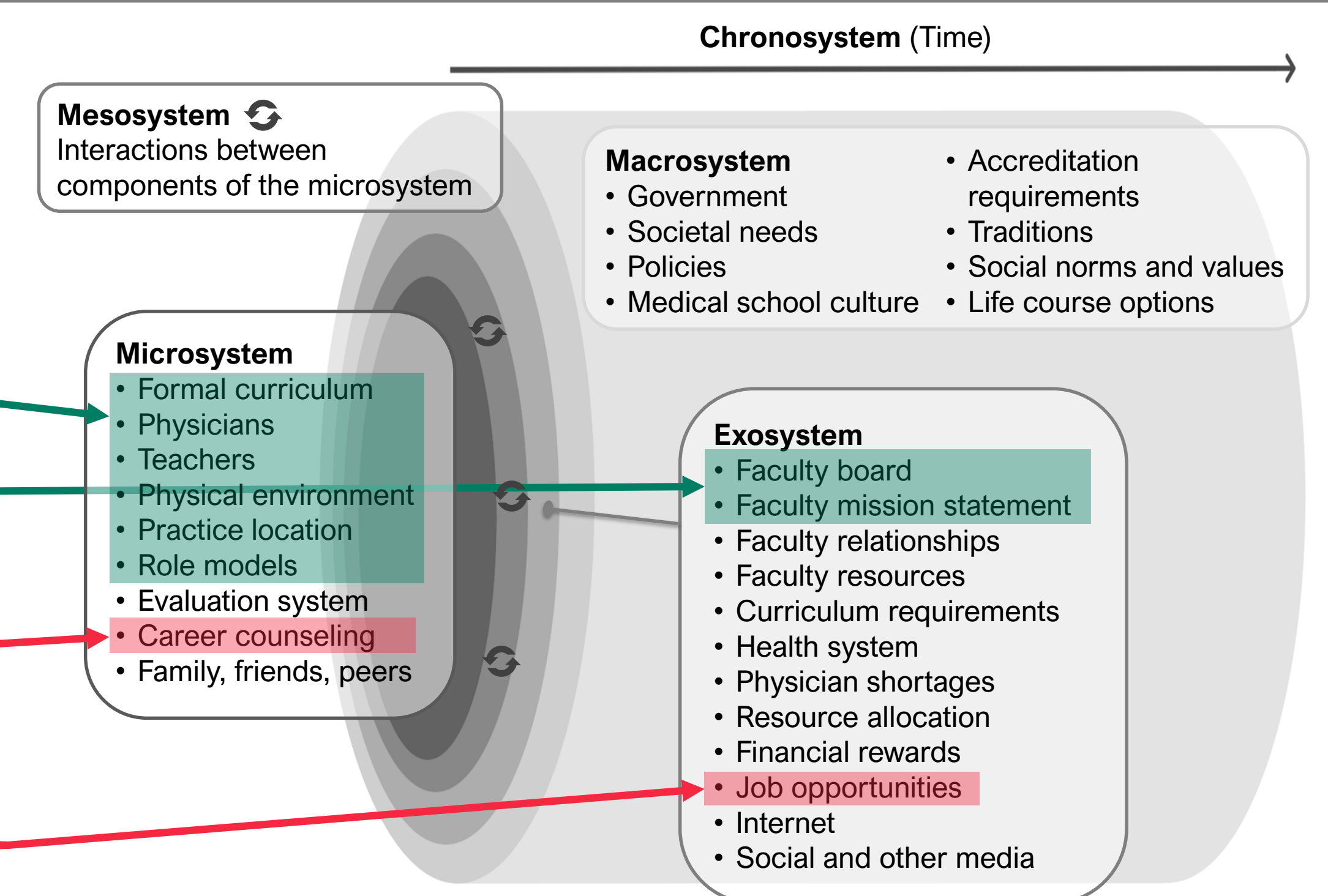
In recent years, we have been able to reinforce our influence through:

- the development of a structured curriculum,
- increasing the time spent in private practices and training of physician-teachers,
- our implication in several working groups at our medical faculty.

Primary care has also gained importance by being awarded an important role in our faculty's mission statement.

We identified the following further developments that may help strengthen the attractiveness of primary care careers:

- Reinforce and formalize career counselling through a mentoring platform
- Contribute more to make primary care job opportunities more visible: reinforce our actions showing students the various aspects of primary care practice, and continue to provide job opportunities within our Unit (teaching and/or research), to foster academic activities among primary care physicians.



2 Our curriculum's influence on students' career choice process:

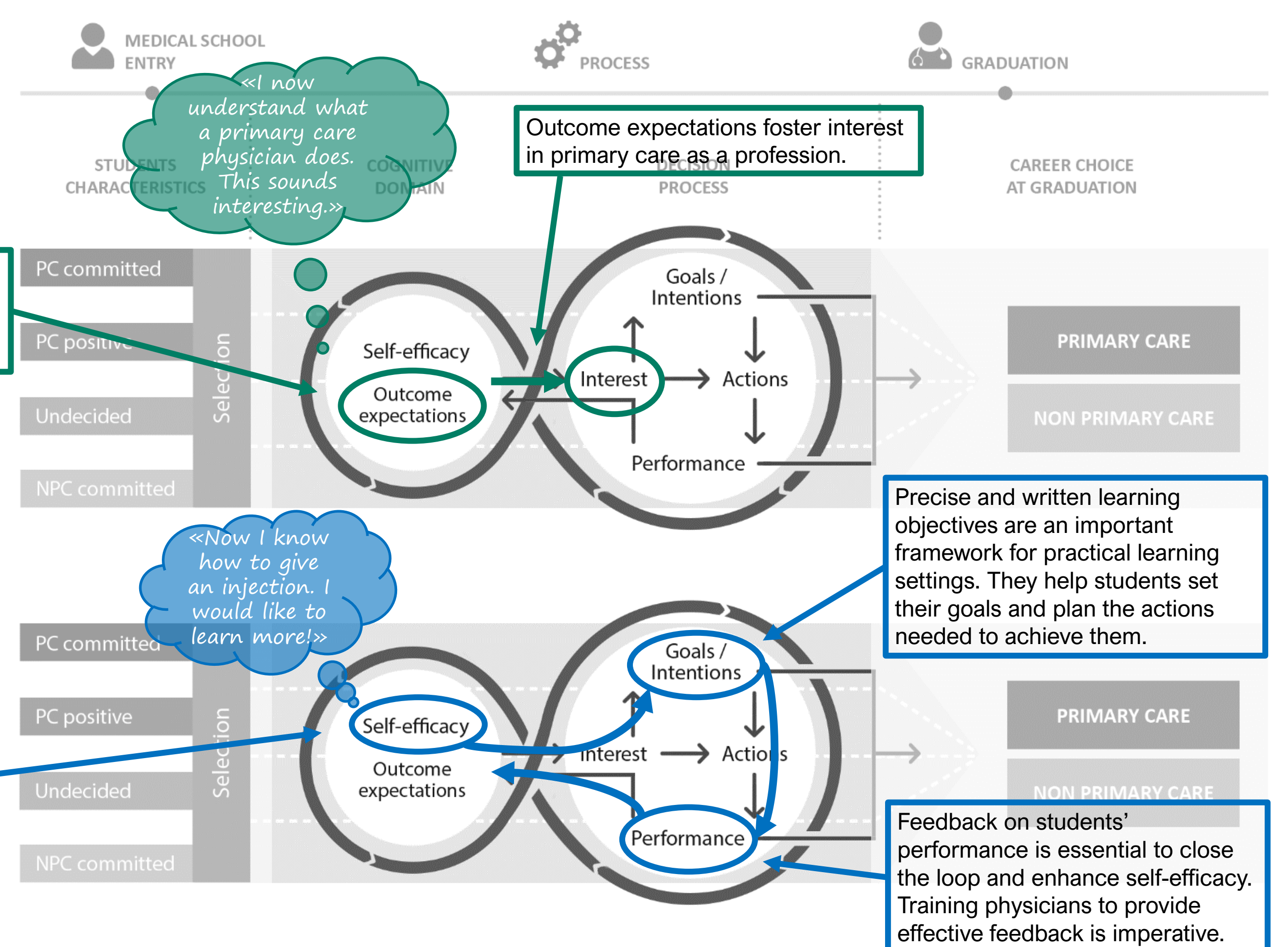
Our Unit's teaching can be grouped according to the structure of the medical studies:

- Bachelor year 1: «MIGA» (médecine interne générale ambulatoire): a series of lectures spread over the year, covering various aspects relevant to primary care: medical knowledge, patient follow-up, clinical reasoning, professional attitude. Different ways to practice primary care are also introduced.
- Bachelor years 2 and 3: A series of group sessions covering the medical consultation and patient-physician relationship, with a strong practical component (role-plays), in combination with practical sessions (mini-clerkship in a private practice, exercises with simulated patients).
- Master: Our Unit is involved in the 8-week community and primary care medicine clerkship, and is responsible for the mandatory 1-month primary care clerkship in the last year.*

*Not further described in this poster for reasons of space.

Information on all aspects of the profession mainly acts on students' outcome expectations about a primary care career.

The opportunity to practice what has been learned in role plays, in simulated scenarios and with patients in a primary care practice fosters students' self-efficacy.



Conclusion

The conceptual framework has served as a valuable theoretical basis for critical self-reflection within the Primary Care Unit.

It has allowed us to critically analyse our academic activities and our role in the context of the Faculty of medicine.

Based on this critical analysis, we were able to define precise actions for the future with the aim of strengthening our influence on students' primary care career choice.

We strongly recommend using a conceptual framework for planning and analysis in other primary care teaching and research units.