

Otago Medical School Education and Staff Development Unit

Creating Positive Learning Environments

Online Professional Development Series

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June 2023

Karakia Timatanga

He inoi tatou

Tēnei te wānanga

O te iti, o te rahi

Kia mōhio, kia mārama

Ti hei mauri ora

We are here to learn

All of us

To know and understand

We're in it together

Objectives

By the end of the session you will be able to:

- Describe components of a positive learning environment in classrooms and workplaces
- Identify common disruptors in classroom and workplace environments and explore how to manage these

Plan for the session

- Large group discussion - what do we mean by a 'positive learning environment'
- Small large group activity – common disruptors and managing these
- Large group discussion - sharing of each groups' discussion
- Final thoughts, questions, insights



A Learning Environment...



Ministry of Education

Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga

Ministry of Education (2021)

- Social, physical and pedagogical elements that align and aim for positive educational outcomes
- **Social** – the people in the environment and how they interact
- **Physical** – the property, technology and other resources
- **Pedagogical** – the teaching and learning practises

Classrooms learning environments

Psychosocial

- Group interactions
- Engagement and disengagement

Physical

- The space
- Technology
- Other resources

Pedagogical – the teaching and learning practises

- Being prepared, setting expectations, being clear
- Tension between approaches and accommodating everyone's learning needs

Workplace environments

Psychosocial

- There are patients
- There are many different health professions around and they are constantly changing - people are busy and sometimes stressed
- There are other students and supervisors
- There are hierarchies to learn about and navigate

Physical

- It is a workplace – busy, big, noisy and smells funny
- There are patients and sometimes very sick patients
- There are patient management systems - electronic systems, new systems
- There are machines, masks and PPE

Pedagogical – the teaching and learning practises

- Hard to pre-plan the experience 'the workplace delivers what the workplace delivers'
- Orientation is critical to both task and team
- Use teachable moments
- Providing feedback and opportunities for self-review

Clinical Learning Environment

Defined as the overlapping space between the “work environment” (the clinical context in which trainees learn and participate in patient care), and the “educational context” (the syllabi, curricula, and goals that define methods for learning, expected learning outcomes, and assessment practices).

Nordquist et al, 2019

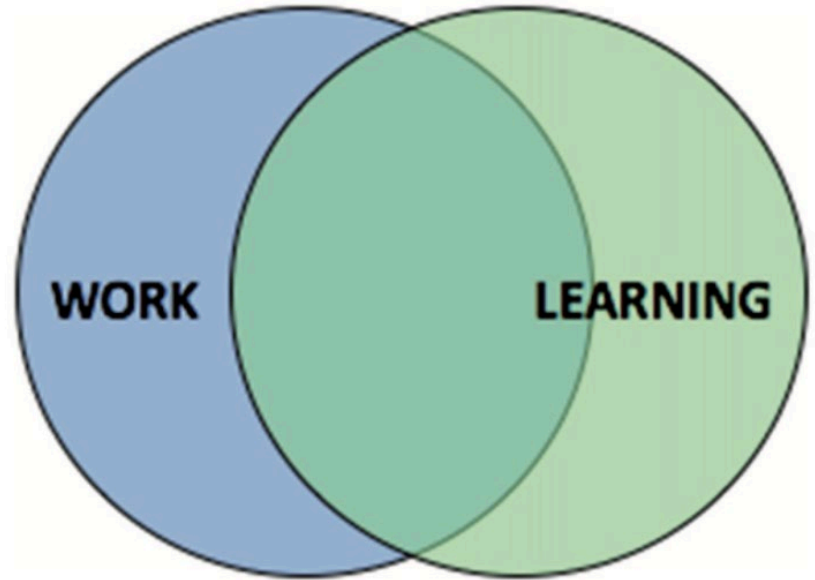


Figure 1. The CLE constitutes the overlap between the domains of work and learning and their congruent and competing rationales.

Small group task

1. **Select to discuss classroom or workplace environments**
2. **Once in the group**
3. **Briefly introduce yourselves to each other**
 - Name and role in teaching and learning
4. **Nominate a scribe/ person to report back (they can be the same person or different)**
5. **Task**
 - Identify those things that disrupt your best plans for fostering a positive learning environment
 - Choose your top three to five and propose strategies to manage these

Is there anything else you do to manage or pre-empt disruptors to a positive learning environment?

What's next in health professions education... closing thoughts...

- The impact of organisational culture on learning environments
 - Recognising the culture of an organisation affects learning
 - We exist in a culture that impacts what we can do

Supervisors/ teachers need to reflect on the culture they are in and how it affects their practice

- Learning environments can change so regular monitoring and action is required.



Final questions/ insights/ observations



Otago Medical School
Te Kura Hauora o Ōtākou

Do you know...

How to enhance the clinical setting as
a learning environment?

DYK 11

I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in
which they can learn – Albert Einstein (attrib)

The Advanced Learning in Medicine years (4-6) are embedded in the clinical workplace, a busy environment whose primary focus is the patient.

Such settings may not always seem to be effective for learning, but the workplace provides authentic conditions for students to apply their training.

ASK YOURSELF:

If you were a student, what would make the area you work in an effective learning environment for you?

Attempts have been made to measure the learning environment, each with varying degrees of success. For example, *The Undergraduate Clinical Education Environment Measure (UCEEM)*¹ is specifically aimed at the clinical learning environment and its underpinning assumptions can be used to guide your development of a positive learning environment (Box 1).

BOX 1

The UCEEM underpinning assumptions

Invitational quality

- Opportunities to participate and learn from work experiences
- Interaction patterns and student inclusion
- Student agency and engagement

Organisational quality

- Preparedness of all parties for student entry
- Space and resources

Pedagogical quality

- Autonomy-supportive environment
- Enhancing student reflective capabilities

RESEARCH AND THE CLINICAL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Part of a questionnaire in one international study² posed the question: 'If you could change **three** things about medical school, what would they be?'

The resulting responses (Box 2) resonate with the feedback from our own medical students and some have implications for clinical teachers.

BOX 2

1. Be aware of the sharp learning curve for learners.
2. It is important to bear in mind that students during their clinical training need more constructive, empowering and empathetic feedback.
3. Many students may be unsure of their role and what to do in the clinical environment, and hence an induction phase or access to mentors may be helpful.
4. Establishing uniformity across curricula through internal consistency and external benchmarking is essential.
5. Be aware that students are under personal, academic and financial stress, and are likely to have multiple goals, such as social, intimacy, financial and career aspirations.
6. Learning is promoted by engaging constructive feedback, promoting empowerment and trust, establishing rapport building and encouraging positive role modelling.
7. Students appreciate access to study materials, such as reading, written documentation and the computer interface.
8. Establish independent student and teacher support systems to support and ensure functional learning.

A project³ conducted by and among medical students identified the features students valued most in the clinical learning environment (Box 3).

BOX 3

- **Structural factors:** The organisation of the clinical placement
- **Interpersonal factors:** The 'Spectrum of Support' referring to support received on various levels from staff to peers
- **Intrapersonal factors:** The proactivity, preparedness and personality of each student
- **Vocational development opportunities:** Including practical experience or clinical exposure and teaching opportunities

References

- DYK 11. How to enhance the clinical setting as DYK 11 a learning environment? (2015). <http://www.otago.ac.nz/medical-school/otago614733.pdf>
- Ministry of Education (2021). Designing learning environments from <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/projects-and-design/design/designing-learning-environments>
- Nordquist J, Hall J, Caverzagie K, Snell L, Chan MK, Thoma B, Razack S & Philibert I (2019) The clinical learning environment, *Medical Teacher*, 41:4, 366-372, DOI: 10.1080/0142159X.2019.1566601

Potential disruptors

available time/resources

changing expectations (of students, patients, employers, medical schools, colleges)

competing demands and competing priorities (treating or teaching)

opportunistic nature of clinical work

knowing what to teach, when to teach and how to teach it

increased training paperwork and assessment load

issues around consent

concerns about risks involved in student/trainee practice

unpredictable workload

learners from different levels of training and specialties

emergent patient care priorities

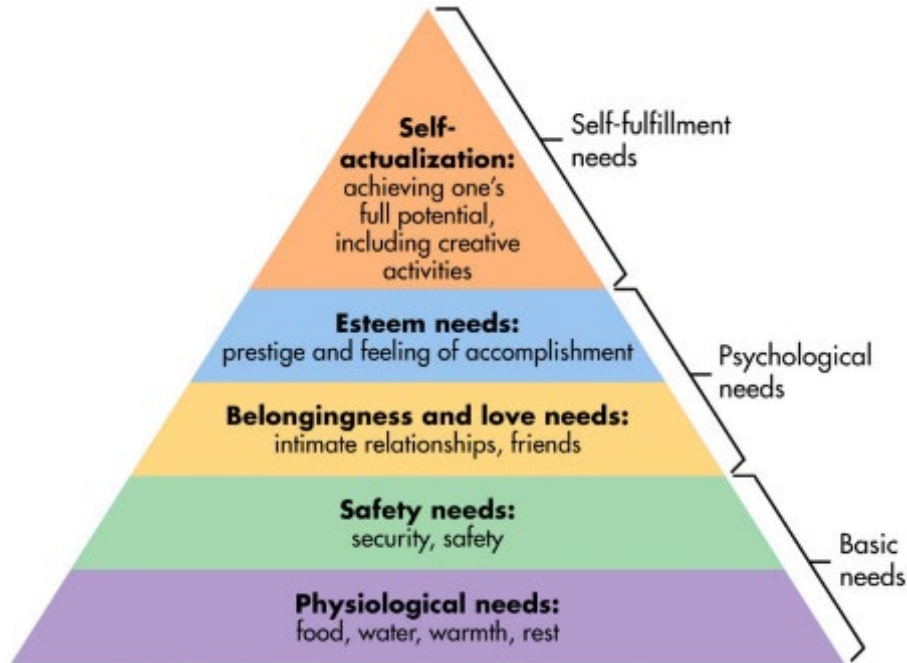
criticism of teaching

limited faculty development

lack of rewards

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Maslow, A. H. (1943).



Relationship to learning?

Physiological (correct room temperatures, drink breaks)

Safety (attitude of teacher: accepting & non-judgmental, pleasant, nonthreatening)

Belongingness (teacher-student relationship, student-student relationships)

Esteem (self esteem, respect)

Self actualization (meaningful learning, self agency, reflection)