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Editorial

Learning environment and its impact on students' learning

The learning environment is an interactive network of forces between students and teachers, teaching, and learning activities, good physical resources and students' psychosocial and emotional sides that are experienced by students and other stakeholders in a learning institution. The term also includes the culture of a medical school or class, its governing philosophy and features, including how individuals interact with and treat one another—as well as the ways in which teachers may organize an educational setting to facilitate learning. The learning environment is the physical, social, and psychological context in which a student learns.

Academic interest in students' perceptions of health professional learning environment has been increasing in recent years as indicated by study findings quoting the differences in students' perception about their learning environment based on gender differences, types of curriculum, years of study, entry requirements, ethnicity, across different courses of study, disciplines and academic results. The professional development of medical practitioners depends, to a large extent on the characteristics of the learning environment where they study or work. The learning environment ideally nurtures academic activities, growth of students and helps to achieve the goal of producing high quality graduates who are well prepared with knowledge, problem solving and manipulative skills as well as soft skills with good attitudes and values. Learning approaches are significantly influenced by students' perception of the learning environment.

Learning environment also needs to be measure as a part of curriculum review process, to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the current medical curriculum thus could provide useful information to guide the curriculum review committee during the curriculum review process. A supportive learning environment supports student well-being and improves student empathy, professionalism, and academic success, whereas an unsupportive learning

environment may lead to burnout, exhaustion, and sarcasm.

Developing a total learning environment for students in a particular course or program is probably the most innovative part of teaching. While there is a tendency to focus on either physical institutional learning environments (such as classrooms, lecture theatres and labs), or on the technologies used but learning environment is broader than just these physical components. It also includes the

- characteristics of the learners;
- for teaching and learning;
- activities that best supports learning;
- assessment plans that will best measure and drive learning
- culture that infuses the learning environment.

By addressing all these, an institute might be said to have a good learning environment. Studies reported that students' perception of the learning environment within which they study has shown a significant impact on their behaviour, academic progress and sense of wellbeing. Research should be carried out to investigate the specific features of a medical school that contribute most significantly to student perceptions of the medical school learning environment, both positive and negative for pinpointing potential interventions and improvements. Therefore it is important for any teaching institute to measure its learning environment and to modify and improve it if necessary to achieve its intended goal.

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