

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT:
IT'S IMPORTANT & EFFECT ON TEACHING & LEARNING**

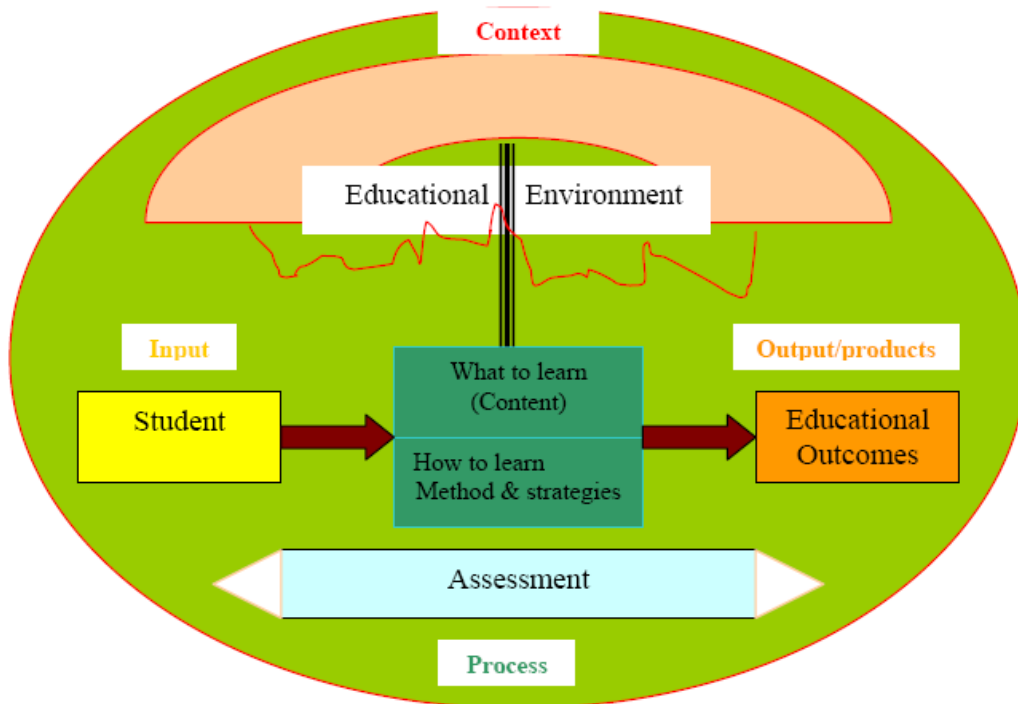
1. The educational/learning environment:

- Kurt Lewin (1936) neatly encapsulated the term in the formula:

$$B = f(P, E)$$

- Where Behaviour (B) = A function (f) of the person (P) and of the environment (E).
- The most important question for the teachers in Health Profession is “What sort of atmosphere do I wish to create for my student?”.

2. Educational environment is identified as one of the important determinants of an effective curriculum:



2. Definition:

- A learning environment is all the physical surroundings, psychological and emotional condition. The social or cultural influences affecting the growth and development of an adult engaged in an educational enterprise/atmosphere (Roger Hiemstra).
- It is the domain where learning takes place and how it impacts upon learning (www.itsnhsap.kcl.ac.uk/site/resources/glossary/keywords.htm)
- The setting in which student instruction occurs.

3. Importance of learning environment

- The educational environment makes an important impact on student learning. It influences how, why and what student learn. It can be both positive and negative:
 - Positive learning environment helps students to learn, develop and provides learning opportunities that support intellectual, career, social and personal development and self-motivation.
 - Positive environment encourages positive social interaction, and active engagement in learning.
 - Positive environment also helps students to adopt the right approach of learning.

4. Barrier in learning environment

- Cross (1981) categories three types of barriers to learning. The barriers are:
 - Situational barrier:
 - External
 - Reflecting the situation in which the individual find themselves at work, at home or in the community i.e. family obligation, job duties, community responsibilities.
 - Internal – unwillingness to deal with, not recognize the need.

- Institutional – physical, atmosphere and support
- Dispositional – place into wrong or unsuitable position. Has low significance.

5. Creating positive learning environment (classroom)

- Initial contact with the learner.
- Creating the three R's
 - Who are we?
 - Who am I as the instructor?
 - Why are we here?
- Using ice breakers
 - Self-introduction
 - Partner introduction
 - Learners introduction
- Monitoring the learning environment
 - E.g. having checklist for class progression.

6. Guidelines for creating positive learning environment

- Acknowledgement that all individuals bring multiple perspectives to any learning situation as a result of their gender, ethnicity, class, age, sexuality and/or physical.
- Pay attention to the natural power (inherent intelligent) in relation to knowledge production.
- Be aware that participants are positioned differently in relationship to each other and the knowledge being acquired.
- Acknowledge the power (intelligent) disparity (difference) between the teacher and the students.
- Reflect the experiences of the learner both as individuals and as members of particular social groups, and value these experiences

through their use as the basis of learning and assessment (Shore et al. pg 3).

7. Environmental factors affecting teaching & learning

- Learning depends on several environmental factors. The crucial one is engagement of the learner, which can be affected by
 - Motivation:
 - Intrinsic factors (from inside of student) – helps the student to adopt a deep learning approach.
 - Extrinsic factors (from outside of student)
 - Assessment are usually a strong extrinsic motivator
 - Teacher role
 - enthusiasm for the subject, interest in the student experiences and clear direction
 - Physiological needs
 - Physical factors make it difficult for learners and teachers to relax and pay attention. Ensuring adequate breaks and mindful of physical environment.
 - Safety
 - Belonging
 - Being a respected member, having one's voice heard and attended, being given a useful role and having colleagues with similar backgrounds, experiences and goals may give the student a sense of belonging.
 - Inclusion and consultation
 - Input to a course's objectives and structure should be sought, valued and acted on.
 - Self-esteem

- Make the learner feel valued by praise, words of appreciation, constructivist rather than destructive criticism.
 - Self-actualization.
- Perception of relevance
 - Students' perception of the relevance of what are being taught is a vital motivator for learning
 - Relevance for immediate needs
 - For future work
 - Getting a certificate or degree regardless of content
 - "If a teacher is asked to conduct a session with the learners they don't know, he/she should prepare both before and at the start of the session by determining what the learners know, want to know, and expect to learn. This involves and shows respect for the learners and encourages them to invest in the session."
- Teacher as a role model
 - Most powerful variables in educational environment the teachers:
 - Action
 - Attitudes (evidenced by tone, voice, comments mode, etc)
 - Enthusiasm
 - Interest in the subject will also affect learners indirectly.
 - "Attitudes are learned through observation of those in relative power or seniority. Teachers must therefore be aware of providing good role modeling in the presence of students."
- Maximizing educational environment
 - It includes all physical environment in relation to classroom, tutorials, seminars and lectures

- Room temperature
- Comfort of seating, background
- Noise and visual destruction are all physical environmental factors that affect student’s concentration and motivation.
- Check list to ensure good physical environment.
- Course and curriculum design
 - The designer of course should consider the relevance of the learning environment to the potential learners. There should be:
 - Student representative on curriculum committees
 - The aims, objectives and assessment methods should be well informed
 - The teaching methods should be build on learners experience
 - Creating collaborative environment
 - Disseminating the course evaluation findings
 - Staff training

