Optimizing Learning Environments for the Health Professions

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Learning Objectives

- Identify the key elements of the learning environment

- Articulate a vision for an optimal learning environment

- Select a strategy to enhance learning for everyone in your setting

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Clinical Learning Environment Review (CLER)

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CLER Pathways to Excellence

Expectations for an optimal clinical learning environment to achieve safe and high quality patient care
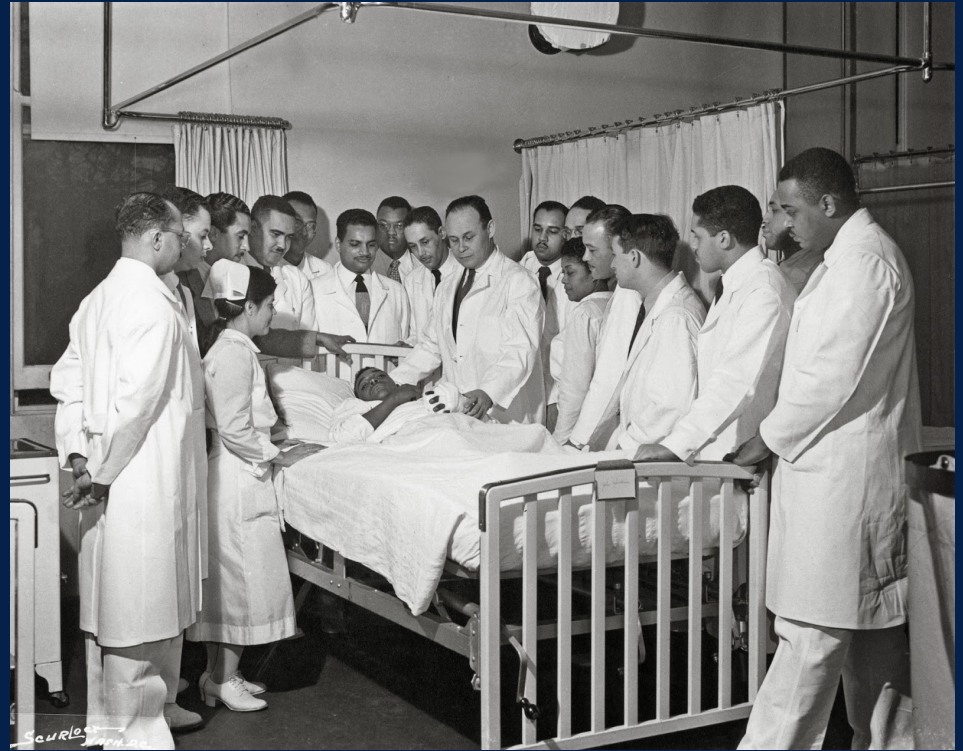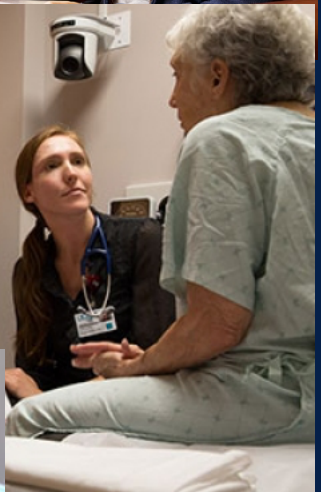
AAMC Statement on the Learning Environment

Respect Collegiality cooperation Integrity Resilience Excellence collaboration kindness Compassion

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What do we mean by "learning environment?"

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A Moment To Reflect

When I hear the term learning environment, I think: ….

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Improving Environments for Learning in the Health Professions

Proceedings of a conference chaired by
David M. Irby, PhD

April 2018 | Atlanta, Georgia

December 2018

Conference Overview

- 44 leaders in health professions education, health care delivery, learners, patient advocates, and educational accreditors

- 2 commissioned papers and 3 case studies

- 3 days of deliberations generated recommendations

- Final product was reviewed and approved by all

Definition of "Learning Environment"

Learning environment refers to the social interactions, organizational cultures and structures, and physical and virtual spaces that surround and shape participants' experiences, perceptions, and learning.

Definition of "Learners"

In a continuously learning and improving health system, every participant is both a learner and a teacher. Participants include undergraduate and graduate health professions students, trainees, and researchers enrolled in formal educational programs as well as practitioners, educators, administrators, staff, patients, families, and community members.

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Two commissioned papers for conference

COMMISSIONED PAPER:

INTERVENTIONS DESIGNED TO IMPROVE THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT IN THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS: A SCOPING REVIEW

JOSIAH MACY JR FOUNDATION
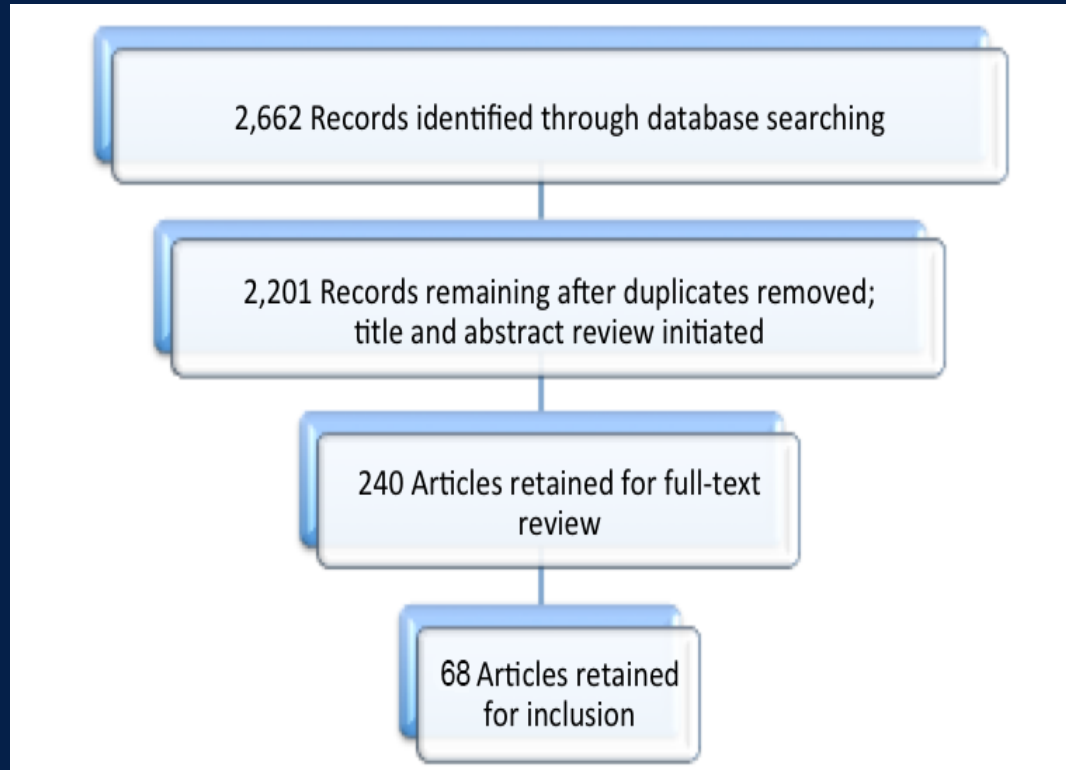
Larry Gruppen, David Irby, Steven Durning, Lauren Maggio

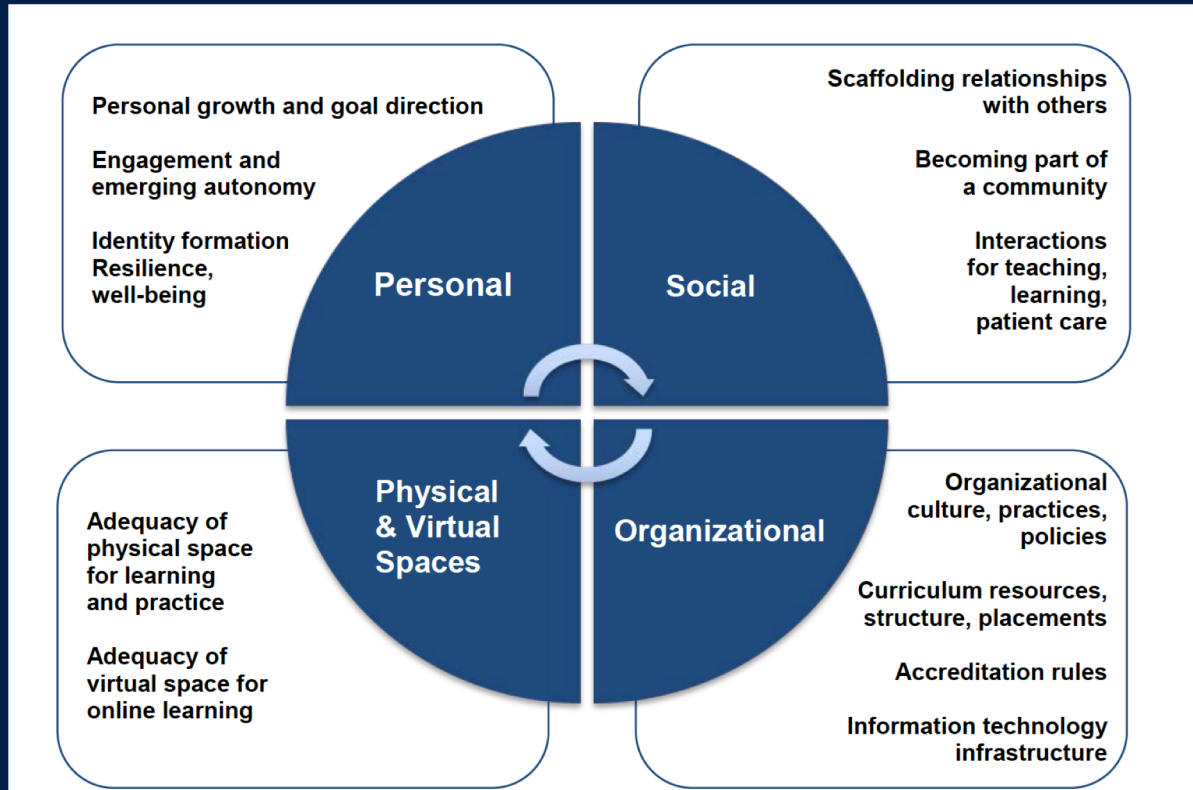Sandrijn van Schaik, Susan Reeves, Linda Headrick

COMMISSIONED PAPER:

TOWARD EXEMPLARY LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS FOR THE HEALTH PROFESSIONS

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Paper 1: A Scoping Review

2,662 Records identified through database searching

2,201 Records remaining after duplicates removed; title and abstract review initiated

240 Articles retained for full-text review

68 Articles retained for inclusion

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Conceptual Framework

Personal Dimension

Personal growth and goal direction

Engagement and emerging autonomy

Identity formation
Resilience,
well-being

Personal

Social Dimension

Social

Scaffolding relationships with others

Becoming part of a community

Interactions for teaching, learning, patient care
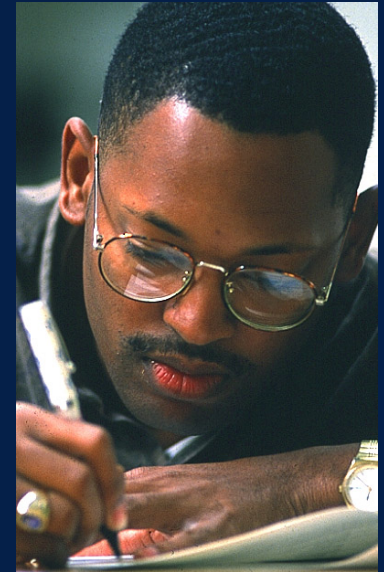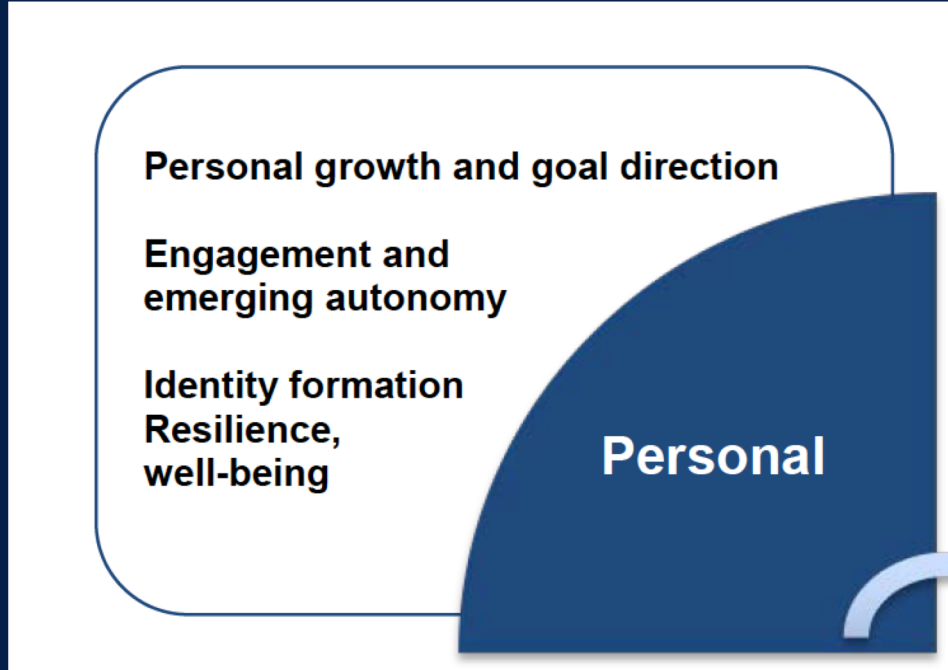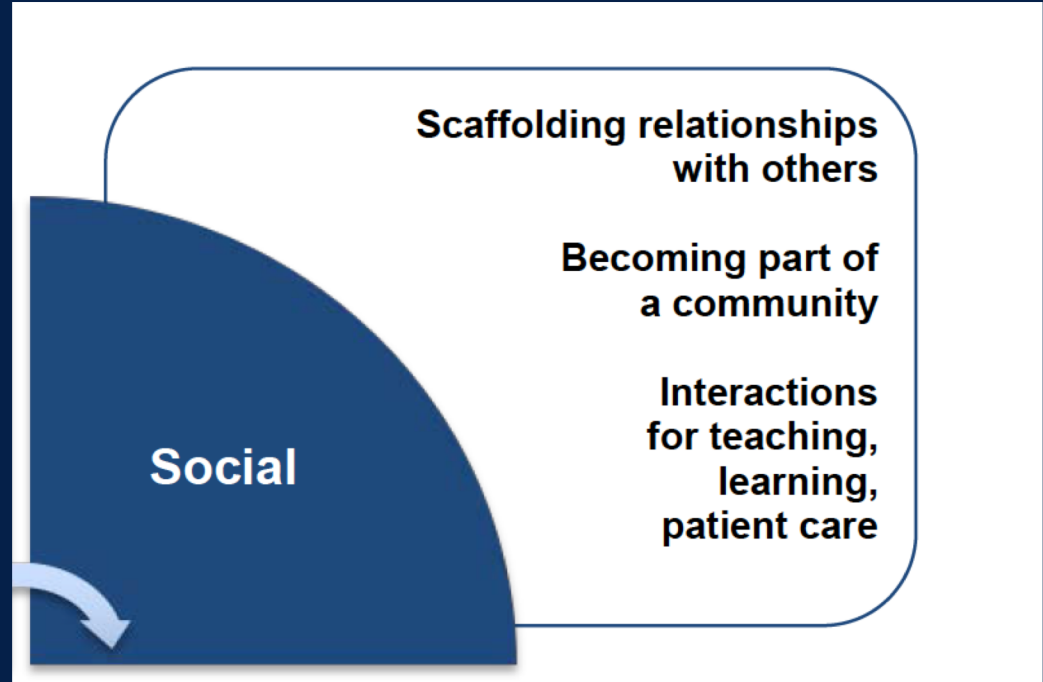
Organizational Dimension

Organizational

- Organizational culture, practices, policies
- Curriculum resources, structure, placements
- Accreditation rules
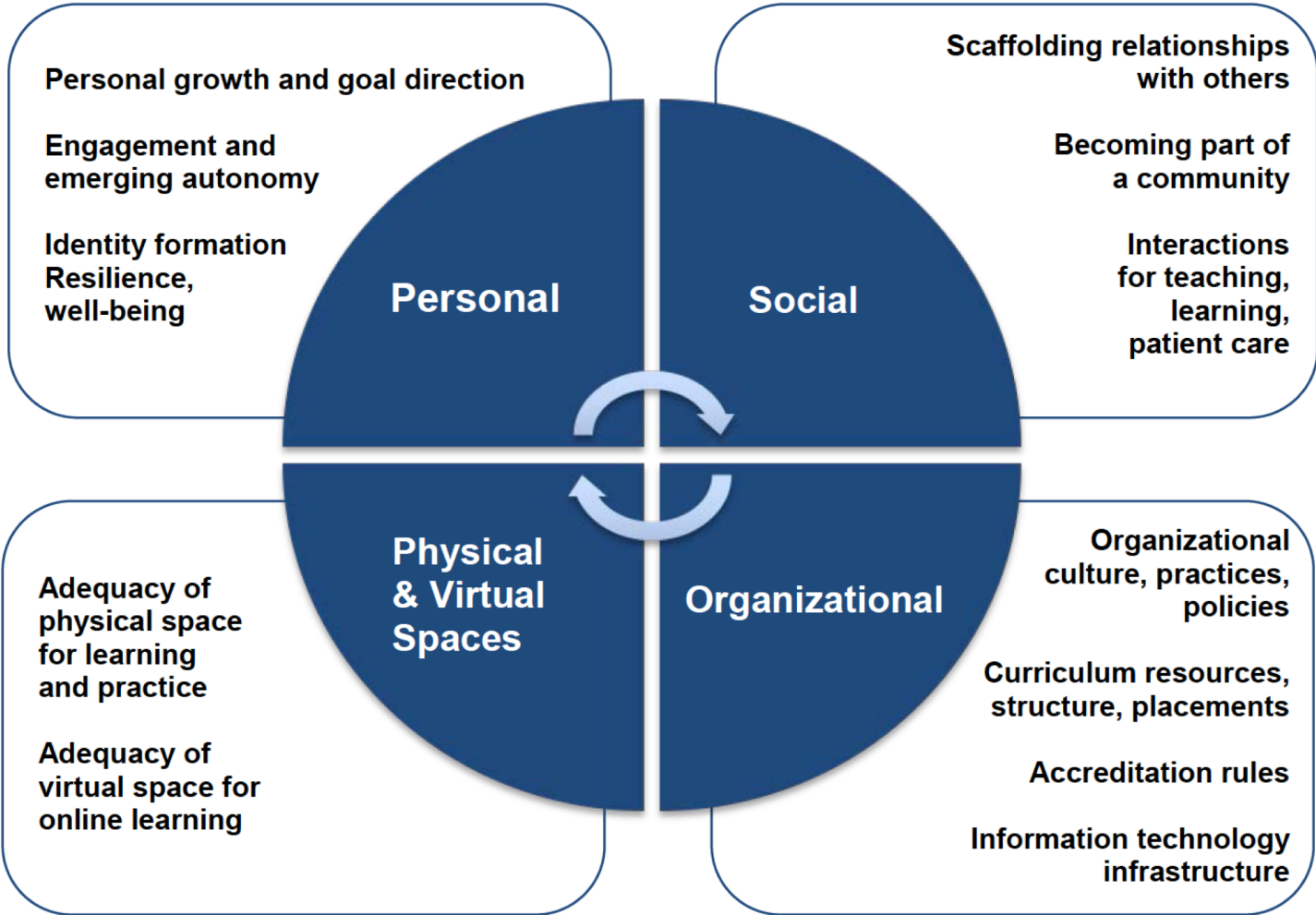- Information technology infrastructure

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Physical/Virtual Dimension

Adequacy of physical space for learning and practice

Adequacy of virtual space for online learning

Physical & Virtual Spaces

Strategies to Improve Learning Environments

- Accreditation regulations
  - *Work hours, well-being*
- Curricular Interventions
  - *Continuity, transitions*
- Faculty Development
- Grading Practices
  - *Pass/fail*

- Educational Interventions
  - *Blended learning, equity and diversity*
- Physical/Virtual Spaces
  - *Adequate space and online resources*
- Support Services
  - *Mentoring, peer support, well-being*

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Paper 2: Vision for Exemplary Learning Environments

Prepare, support, and inspire everyone involved in health professions education and healthcare to work toward optimal health of individuals, populations, and communities

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Learning environments as complex adaptive systems

Patterns

Feedback

Diverse agents interact within boundaries (rules)

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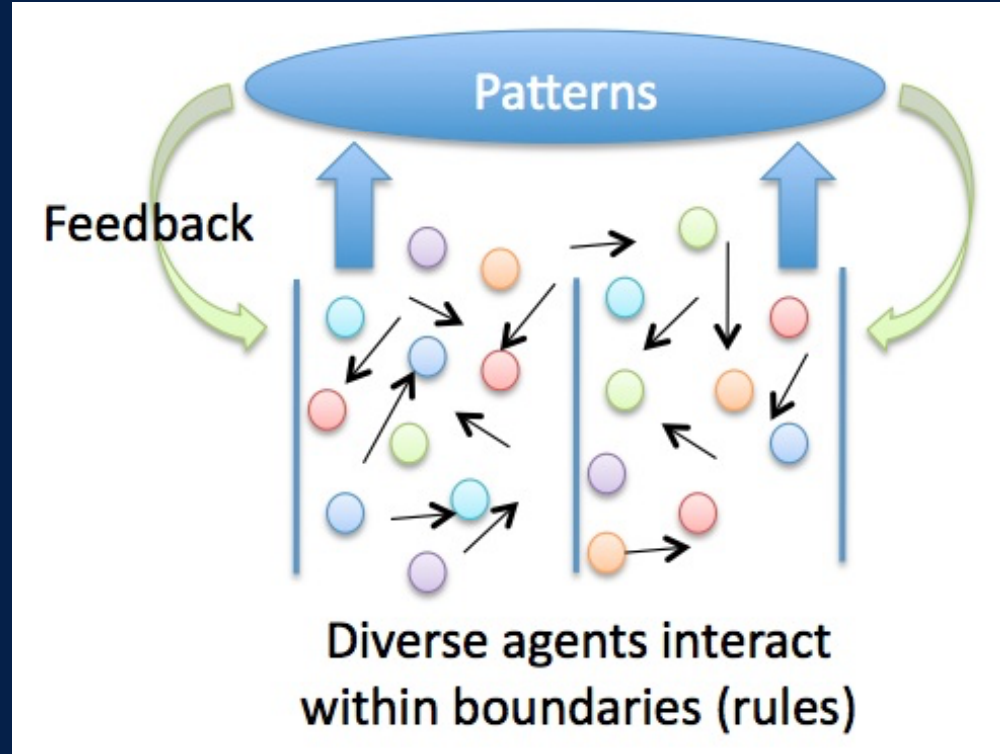
Four "Simple Rules" for Learning Environments

1. Shared goal of healthcare and health professional education: improving health

2. Learning is work and work is learning

3. Collaboration with integration of diverse perspectives

4. Focus on continuous improvement and innovation

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Examples of Vision in Action

1. Healthcare and health professional education share a goal of improving health for individuals, populations and communities

   - Integration of learners into systems projects

   - Incorporation of population health into medical school curriculum

   - Academic-practice partnerships

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Examples of the Vision in Action

2. **In exemplary learning environments learning is work and work is learning**

- Early clinical integration

- Explicit attention to learning goals during patient-centered rounds

- Initiatives that support professional identity formation and wellbeing

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Examples of the Vision in Action

3. Exemplary learning environments recognize that collaboration with integration of diverse perspectives is essential for success

   - Focus on diversity and inclusion, in admissions process, orientation and faculty development

   - Interprofessional education initiatives

   - Creation of collaborative leadership structures, explicitly invite women leaders

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Examples of the Vision in Action

4. The organizations and agents in the learning environments learn from and about themselves, and the greater system they are part of, in order to achieve continuous improvement and innovation

- Data driven assessment (dashboards)

- Collect data on the performance of graduates

- Focus on inquiry in curriculum

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Putting Ideas into Action

- Take 3 minutes to individually think of an intervention

- Two groups per table; each person gets 1 minute to pitch their idea to the group

- Each group selects one idea to work on

- Take 10-15 minutes to complete the worksheet as a group

- Select one person to report out to the larger group

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Discussion

- Report out ideas, discuss surprises and challenges

Conference Recommendations

I: Engaging Academic and Health Care Organization Governance

Governance bodies and executive leadership of organizations responsible for health professions education and health care delivery should ensure positive learning and work environments and be held accountable for allocating the resources necessary to achieve this.

II: Engaging Executive Leadership to Provide Organizational Support

Executive leaders of health professions education and health care organizations should create cultures in which resources, policies, and processes support optimal learning environments across the continuum of health professions education.

III: Creating Physical and Virtual Spaces for Learning

Those in positions of responsibility for learning environments in health professions education and health care organizations should ensure appropriate, flexible, and safe spaces (physical and virtual) for learning.

IV: Providing Faculty and Staff Development

Leaders of health professions education and health care organizations should ensure continuous learning and development opportunities for their faculty and staff to improve learning environments.

V: Promoting Research and Scholarship

Those in positions of responsibility for learning environments should be committed to continuously evaluating, improving, and conducting research on those learning environments.

VI: Setting Policy

Health professions education and health care organization leaders and accreditors should engage in policy advocacy for improvements in health professions learning environments.

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Summary

- Learners, practitioners and patients all thrive in positive environments that support their growth, development and well-being.

- All are called to support and sustain exemplary learning environments that promote the health and well-being of all.

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References

- Irby DM. Improving environments for learning in the health professions. Proceedings of a conference sponsored by Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation in April 2018; New York, NY: Josiah Macy Jr. Foundation, 2018.

- van Schaik SM, Reeves SA, Headrick LA. Exemplary Learning Environments for the Health Professions: A Vision. *Acad Med.* (In press)

- Gruppen LD, Irby DM, Durning SJ, Maggio LA. Conceptualizing Learning Environments in the Health Professions. *Acad Med.* (In press)

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