



Maturity Matrix for Enabling a Good Learning Environment

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The professional development of healthcare practitioners is enabled by practice environments that commit to a culture for learning¹. This document can be used by individuals or teams to support a reflective review of practice matched against eight principles for a good learning environment². It includes a maturity matrix for reviewing personal professional development or for providing structure to team discussions about enabling learning in practice.

To complete the maturity matrix, first consider each principle listed below and appraise team activities for evidence of growth. Identify whether your example activities reflect the features that support each principle. Indicate if they show a *basic, improving or mature* contribution to enabling a good learning environment (see page 4, worked example). Secondly, provide evidence of new or planned developments for strengthening the community practice setting to achieve a mature learning environment.

Leadership for excellence

Be part of a positive learning culture by demonstrating professional, effective, and compassionate leadership in teaching, supervision and assessment. Acknowledge the individual needs and wellbeing of all colleagues. Identify named colleagues across the organisation, who provide leadership for supporting learning in practice.

Effective communication

Provide clear, welcoming communication to introduce the setting, staff and expectations (dress code, hours of work, etc). Offer an induction that details pathways of support and enables learners to start well and feel included. Provide access to different modes of communication, including digital technologies which support networking. Use culturally competent and appropriate language within all communication.

Enable learning through supportive supervision and teaching

Allocate learners to named supervisors with current knowledge and skills in the area being supervised. Foster a positive learning environment by protecting time for reflection, in-person teaching and experiential practice. Provide supervision that focuses on development rather than shortcomings (feed forward). Recognise different learning preferences, offering flexible approaches and individual learning plans matched to relevant course curricula.

Assessment strategies for progress monitoring

All assessors to evidence their preparation for the assessor role and ability to evaluate learner progress, consistent with regulatory body requirements. Work to an agreed model for assessment. Identify in-person protected time to provide constructive feedback to aid each learner to meet professional proficiencies. Take early action in the event of non-progression and identify support pathways for learners. Celebrate success.

Interprofessional collaboration and learning

Collaborate to support learning across professional groups, settings and institutions. Use systems, processes and personnel to coordinate opportunities for learning and assessment. Work to an agreed model for learning.

Equality and anti-discriminatory practice

Respect individuals, acknowledging their intersectionality³ and right for equality. Enable safe situations and provide support to use Freedom to Speak Out mechanisms. Be culturally aware and evidence the use of inclusive learning approaches. Support the development of cultural competence for individuals and teams.

Safety and continuous improvement









Prioritise health and safety, with a focus on continuous improvement addressing leadership, communication and innovation in practice learning. Demonstrate a commitment to trauma-informed practices and consider 'what a person needs' as opposed to 'what is wrong'. Develop and provide space for restorative practice. Provide preceptorship.

Quality improvement and innovation informed by evidence

Actively engage with research and evaluation to inform best practice. Enable implementation of evidence to enhance the quality of teaching, learning and provision of community public health practice. Role model a commitment to personal professional development. Practise in line with professional regulatory requirements.

Complete the maturity matrix to appraise development towards achieving these principles.

Maturity matrix: practice in action to enable a good learning environment

Practice in action Principles for Enabling Learning in Practice	Individual or Team Appraisal:			
	Date:	Review due:		
	Provide examples of activities and indicate whether these show a <i>basic, improving or mature</i> * contribution to the learning environment	Basic	Improving	Mature
 Leadership for excellence		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 Effective communication		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 Learning with supportive supervision and teaching		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 Assessment strategies		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 Interprofessional collaboration and learning		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 Equality and anti-discriminatory practice		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 Safety and continuous improvement		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
 Quality improvement and innovation informed by evidence		<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Supportive Learning Environment				









* Basic = evidence of meeting at least one of the features supporting the principle; Improving = consistently meeting at least half of the features supporting the principle; Mature = consistently meeting all features supporting the principle, with some evidence of further development.

Development plans for strengthening the learning environment

Plans for developing practice	
Individual or Team Appraisal:	
Principles for Enabling Learning in Practice	Date: _____ Review due: _____
<i>Indicate plans for strengthening the practice setting that will help with achieving a mature learning environment.</i>	
 Leadership for excellence	
 Effective communication	
 Learning with supportive supervision and teaching	
 Assessment strategies	
 Interprofessional collaboration and learning	
 Equality and anti-discriminatory practice	
 Safety and continuous improvement	
 Quality improvement and innovation informed by evidence	
Supportive Learning Environment	

Worked example of completed maturity matrix

Maturity matrix: practice in action to enable a good learning environment

Practice in action Principles for Enabling Learning in Practice		Individual or Team Appraisal: North District 0-19 Team		
		Date: 17/04/2024	Review due: April 2025	
		Basic	Improving	Mature
Provide examples of activities and indicate whether these show a <i>basic, improving or mature*</i> contribution to the learning environment				
 Leadership for excellence	<i>We have a named lead for supporting learning and know how to contact them. We have training available in compassionate leadership which some team members have completed. A number of assessors have accessed this leadership training.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Effective communication	<i>Clear (regularly reviewed) induction programme, intro pack for new starters (co-designed with students), telephone conversation prior to placement, mechanisms in place to check appropriateness of written communication, team attend annual Approved Educational Institution (AEI) updates on curriculum. Meet with academic links twice a year; students routinely invited to pre-placement visits; student access to organisation's email and team texting facility set up as part of induction.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 Learning with supportive supervision and teaching	<i>All learners are allocated to named supervisor and deputy. Time protected for specific meetings, but not all supervision is in-person. Personal learning plans developed by at least day 3 of placement.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Assessment strategies	<i>Assessors work to AEI model and attend regular AEI workshops on student assessment, academic and practice assessor meetings set up for SCPHN students. Organisational celebration event held annually, though not currently involving students.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Interprofessional collaboration and learning	<i>Interprofessional community of practice sessions available & students are encouraged to attend.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Equality and anti-discriminatory practice	<i>All staff are required to join cultural competence training. Intersectionality (experiences) is explored within staff personal development plans - wellbeing and work category. Information about Freedom to Speak Up has been added to induction packs and this topic is a regular agenda item on team meeting. Adjustments have been made to team communication to improve accessibility and involvement of all staff and students.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
 Safety and continuous improvement	<i>Signing in/out process when out in community settings, lone working. Time taken to debrief students following client interactions. Team is exploring possibility of trauma-informed training for staff. A preceptorship programme is available.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Quality improvement and innovation informed by evidence	<i>Team members pledge to role model a commitment to professional development (PD) and PD is regular item on team agenda to discuss fair access to new training/study day opportunities.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supportive Learning Environment				

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Notes

1. Mlambo M, Silén C, McGrath C. Lifelong learning and nurses' continuing professional development, a meta-synthesis of the literature. *BMC Nurs* 20, 62 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12912-021-00579-2>
2. The eight learning environment principles were identified as part of a collaborative educational infrastructure project. The work was led by the Institute of Health Visiting (iHV) working in partnership with the School and Public Health Nurses Association (SAPHNA) during 2023- 2024 and was funded by London NHS England Workforce Training and Education Directorate (NHSE WTED), previously Health Education England. The content has been developed following a review of existing published material. The final content and format of the document has been refined following extensive iHV and SAPHNA stakeholder engagement. The iHV and SAPHNA would like to thank all the practitioners, students, service leads and educationalists who gave their time to support the development of this resource and the accompanying charter for enabling a good learning environment.
3. Intersectionality refers to the mix and crossover of social characteristics that each person holds, i.e. race, gender, disability, occupation, sexual orientation etc, which can impact on an individual's experience of social situations and interactions with others.