

Medical School through a Learning Community Lens



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- ❖ Learning communities (LCs) consist of people with shared interests who engage in collaborative learning and “foster active over passive learning, cooperation over competition, and community over isolation” (Cross, 1998, p 5).
- ❖ LCs are congruent with the changing epistemologies of knowledge, are supported by research, and educate students for “lives of work and service” (Cross, 1998, p. 11).
- ❖ Historically considered a fiercely competitive environment, some schools of medicine have embraced the LC philosophy. When viewed through the lens of a LC, it becomes evident that **Wright State University’s Boonshoft School of Medicine** with its defining culture, academics, and environment embodies this ideology.

CULTURE

Culture is a social construct of artifacts, norms, traditions, assumptions, values, and practices that guide behavior and judgment (Manning, 1993).

Artifacts

- Medical terminology
- “Doctor”
- Scrubs, lab coats, stethoscopes
- Cadavers
- Behavior: professionalism, caring

Admissions criteria aligns with espoused values (WSUBSOM, 2012)

- Students selected for ability to work collaboratively
- Humanistic
- Not looking for rockstars
- Primary care values

Cultural integration

- Mentoring: “Bigs” and “Littles”
- 1st year orientation

Ritualistic performances

- White coat ceremony
- 3 USMLE Boards - national exams
- Match Day
- Graduation

ACADEMICS

Collaborative learning at the bedside

- Practice: learning by doing engages high level skills such as analysis and synthesis (Lenning, Hill, Saunders, Solan, & Stokes, 2013)

Team based learning (TBL)

- Knowledge is constructed and contextual (Lenning et al., 2013)
- TBL bridges concepts and application (Thompson et al., 2007)
- Individual study→test→team negotiation
→team test→ team case study

ENVIRONMENT

Human environments play a role in the development of communities (Strange & Banning, 2001).

Physical design

- Flexible spaces
- Mobile furniture
- Lecture hall can flex as discussion tables
- Medical school is located on WSU’s campus but separate, peripheral

As aggregates of people

- Accommodates various learning styles
- Congruence between people and the environment

As reflective of the organization

- Responsive to societal needs
- Primary care/social medicine

Student perceptions of environment

- Enacted v. espoused values

Safety and Inclusion

- Allows risk taking (Lenning et al., 2013)

OUTCOMES

- Deeper learning
- Incites creativity, analytical and critical thinking (Levine-Laufgraben, 2004)
- Emotional intelligence, sensitivity to diverse perspectives, conflict management (Kezar & Lester, 2009)
- Reflection, transformation, and the co-creation of knowledge (Palloff & Pratt, 2005)