

# Quality Learning Environment

## Characteristics of a Traditional Learning Environment

- teacher directs the learning
- students generally work alone
- evaluation through teacher's grading
- passive response to the learning opportunity
- preference for taking safest route
- lecture (statement) rather than questioning
- disconnectedness for the task and its meaning
- teacher feels responsibility for outcome

## Characteristics of a Quality Learning Environment

- lively interaction with others
- sense of teamwork
- understanding of purpose
- passion for the learning itself
- immediate feedback
- active participation
- encouragement for risk taking
- structure of communication: question rather than statement
- sense of connectedness with the task and its meaning
- learner feels responsibility for outcome

## Effective tools or strategies of a Quality Learning Environment

- tools for interaction: among these are brainstorming and its variation, affinity exercises, and appropriate question-response techniques:
- teamwork: promoted in project-based learning and improvement as well as established techniques of cooperative learning:
- understanding of purpose: developed by affinity exercises, relations diagram:
- passion for the learning itself: derives from active use of all of these tools and promotion of opportunities to take responsibility for learning:
- immediate feedback: portfolios, check sheets, and competency matrices provide feedback to the process rather than judgment of the performance:
- active participation: assessment and feedback strategies that emphasize participation in the evaluation of processes, as well as project-based learning and the use of problem-solving tools.
- encouragement for risk taking: less emphasis on grade and evaluation, more on improvement of process: application of individual strengths to project learning opportunities.
- structure of communication: question rather than statement, fostered by plan-do-study act cycle as well as appropriate questioning techniques:
- sense of connectedness with the task and its meaning: all of these tools, as well as opportunities to make choices in task and knowledge construction:
- learner responsibility for outcome: selecting from range of opportunities promotes individual responsibility for outcome.