Teaching and Learning Strategies

Critiquing a student’s performance

Critiquing a student’s performance is in itself a valuable skill and needs to be learnt. Positive critiquing is constructive and negative critiquing is destructive.

Feedback is an essential part of the learning process, and critiquing a student’s performance on a task is a skill in itself. Constructive or positive critiquing is very valuable to a student’s outcome whilst arguably a negative critique may markedly reduce the value of an educational experience.

After the student or students have completed an activity, the following four step approach to critiquing can be applied:

1. What the student thought went well.
2. What the other students/facilitators thought went well (when applicable).
3. Opportunities for improvement identified by the student.
4. Opportunities for improvement identified by the other students/fieldwork educators.

Think of three specific items when critiquing as a student is unlikely to walk away remembering more than three points.

Avoid using words like "but" and "however" in a critique as these tend to turn the critique "upside down" converting your comments from positive to negative.

Tips for giving feedback

- Be specific and constructive
- Avoid giving meaningless praise
- Focus feedback on the impact of behaviours on the client/session outcomes
- Avoid emotional language
- Give a balance of strengths and areas of improvement
- Be specific using examples
- Use data collection to support your observations
- Suggest possible alternatives or options for improvement
- Post questions that will facilitate learning
- Be sensitive about when & where you give feedback to the supervisee
- Put yourself in the student’s place
- Keep feedback limited to the essential/important issues, as excessive feedback will not be processed.

(From “Foundations to Supervision”, Combined Universities Centre for Rural Health)
Generic Vs Expert Feedback

As an IPE facilitator at times you will be called upon to give feedback on an area that is within your area of expertise. This will mean that you can be very specific. At other times you will be required to give feedback on more generic skills such as communication, professionalism, and team working. Again, be specific in your feedback so the student is aware their strengths as well as areas for improvement.

Feedback in the Group Setting

Feedback within a group needs to be managed carefully. Some sensitive issues may be best discussed in a one-to-one context.

It should be noted health professionals RARELY give feedback when professional behaviour (being rude, disrespectful) is poor. Studies have shown supervisors use a variety of indirect ways to show they are unhappy through walking away, looking on disapprovingly, stiffen, look grim, skirt around the behaviour, ignore it, use humour, point out it might be bad for future practice (rather than being bad for the client or client’s care) but do not give a clear message that they think it is wrong. In these circumstances students and trainees do not get the message.

You need to be clear and simple, explaining the impact of the student’s behaviour on the client, other students or staff.

Adapted from University of Western Australia Medical Students Society (wamss.org.au)

Much has been written on feedback. Here are some excellent resources that you can go to for detailed information:

Providing Feedback which Encourages Learning, Teaching and Learning at Curtin (Chap 6)

www.precptor.ca

www.practiceeducation.ca

UK Centre for the Advancement of interprofessional Education (http://www.caipe.org.uk)

University of Toronto (http://ipe.utoronto.ca)