Tips for Writing Narrative Feedback

Virtual Faculty Connection
November 23, 2020
Discussion

• Who are the learners you are evaluating?
• What is the context/setting of the evaluation?
• How is your evaluation of the learner being used?
• What challenges are you facing in evaluating learners?
Purpose of Written Narrative Feedback

- To provide details about student performance and to provide support for high marks and occasional low marks you might give to students on the quantitative section of an evaluation form.
  - To provide formative information to the learner.
  - Gives the stakeholders evidence of the learners' performance.
  - To check for bias.

- To aid in the writing of the MSPE (medical student performance evaluation- (AKA the Dean’s letter) for medical students.

- To aid in writing letters of recommendations (job, educational programs, licensing/credentialing/privileging).
Characteristics of Meaningful Written Narrative Feedback

1. Descriptive & specific (not generalized)
   1. Provide evidence or an example. Use the SBI tool (situation, behavior, and impact) as needed to craft your written evidence/example.

2. Non-judgmental language

3. Behavioral focus (not personality based)

4. Offer concrete suggestions for improvement/attainment of a higher level of performance
Examples of Common Narrative Feedback

- “Pleasant to work with”
- “Needs to read more.”
- “Needs to work on confidence.”
- “Great team player.”
- “Solid knowledge base.”
- “Will make an excellent clinician.”
- “The student was unprofessional”
Before

- “Great team player.”
- “Solid knowledge base”
- “Needs to read more”

After

- “The learner educated the team on information that improved patient care. For example _______”
- “The student demonstrated an impressive fund of knowledge by explaining the diagnostic criteria for X, Y, Z disorders.....answering anatomy questions regarding X, Y, Z correctly....
- “The learner was not familiar with the management of otitis media. I suggest that he reads the AAP OM guidelines.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before</th>
<th>After</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Excellent clinician.”</td>
<td>“Clinical decision making is with minimal errors; written work is complete and timely, and she develops strong rapport with families. Her next step is to increase the number of patients she follows on the ward.”</td>
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Behavioral Focus

Before

• “Resident A is unprofessional.”
• “Resident B is pleasant.”

After

• “Resident A often arrived to the floor late, which limited pre-rounding, and led to inaccurate data presentation and decision making on rounds.”
• “Even in stressful and busy situations Resident B remained calm and unflustered, which lead to an environment where the learners felt comfortable asking questions about patient care”.
Suggestions for Improvement

Before

• Providing no suggestions for improvement

After

• “To advance in teaching skills, he can demonstrate physical exam findings at the bedside while on rounds”.
Suggested Formats for Writing Narrative Feedback

Framework for narrative written feedback - in general

- Strengths
- Areas that need improvement
- One patient encounter that stands out to you

Framework for more comprehensive global assessments

- Core competencies (try to address 1-3)
  - Medical knowledge
  - Interpersonal communication
  - Patient care
  - Professionalism
  - Practice-based learning
  - System-based practice

- PRIME+
  - Professionalism
  - Reporter
  - Interpreter
  - Manager
  - Educator
  - Plus- suggestions for improvement
Take Home Messages

- Be descriptive and specific (provide evidence or examples- use SBI as needed)
- Keep written feedback focused on behaviors, not personality traits
- Always offer a suggestion for improvement or how to attain the next level of performance
- Never use the written assessment to communicate a concern for the first time
- Provide frequent and timely formative feedback to learners before providing a summative narrative assessment
- Keep a record of the comments you want to include in the evaluation (do not rely on memory only)


• FIU Herbert Wertheim School of Medicine. (2020) Faculty Development Modules- Writing Narrative Comments about Student Performance. Retrieved from https://medicine.fiu.edu/academics/continuing-medical-education/online-teaching-modules/index.html


• Holmes et al. (2014). Writing medical student and resident performance evaluations: beyond “performed as expected”. *Pediatrics.* 133(5). 766-768.


