

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”

Descriptive & Specific

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.”

Non- judgmental

Before

- “Excellent clinician.”

After

- “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.”

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)

References

- Association of American Medical Colleges [AAMC]. (2020). Writing Effective Narrative Feedback for the MSPE Webinar. October 23, 2020.
- Cabral, L. (2016). Assessing Learners-Meaningful Evaluations. Retrieved from <https://www.chp.edu/-/media/chp/healthcare-professionals/documents/faculty-development/assessing-learners.pdf>
- 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>
- Gulbas, Guerin, & Ryder. (2016). Does what we write matter? Determining the features of high-and low-quality summative written comments of students on the internal medicine clerkship using pile-sort and consensus analysis: a mixed-methods study. *BMC Medical Education*, 16 (145).
- Holmes et al. (2014). Writing medical student and resident performance evaluations: beyond "performed as expected". *Pediatrics*. 133(5). 766-768.
- Jackson, K. (2015). The Quality of Written Feedback by Attendings of Internal Medicine Residents. *Journal of General Internal Medicine* : JGIM, 30(7), 973–978. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-015-3237-2>
- Lovelace, D. (2018). *Managing Teams*. [Video File]. Retrieved from <https://www.linkedin.com/learning/managing-teams-3/developing-each-team-member?u=15594532>
- MindTools.com (2020). *The Situation-Behavior-Impact Feedback Tool. Providing Clear, Specific Feedback*. [Online]. Available from <https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/situation-behavior-impact-feedback.htm>. [Accessed: November 9, 2020].
- Pelgrim, E.A.M., Kramer, A. W.M., Mokkink, H. G.A. & Van der Vleuten, C. P.M. (2012). Quality of written narrative feedback and reflection in a modified min-clinical evaluation exercise: An observational study. *BMC Medical Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1472-6920-12-97>