

Individual Differences

Introduction

Students arriving at the placement site have their own individual differences that may affect the rapport and trust between supervisor and student. The supervisor should be cognizant of those personal traits and factor them into the supervisory process in order to create the ideal learning environment. Each student has his or her own differences in terms of professional development, learning style and cultural background (e.g. motivation is manifested in different ways depending on cultural context). Gaipman and Anthony (1993) mention two other areas – motivation and skill – in which significant differences are seen.

Motivation and Skill

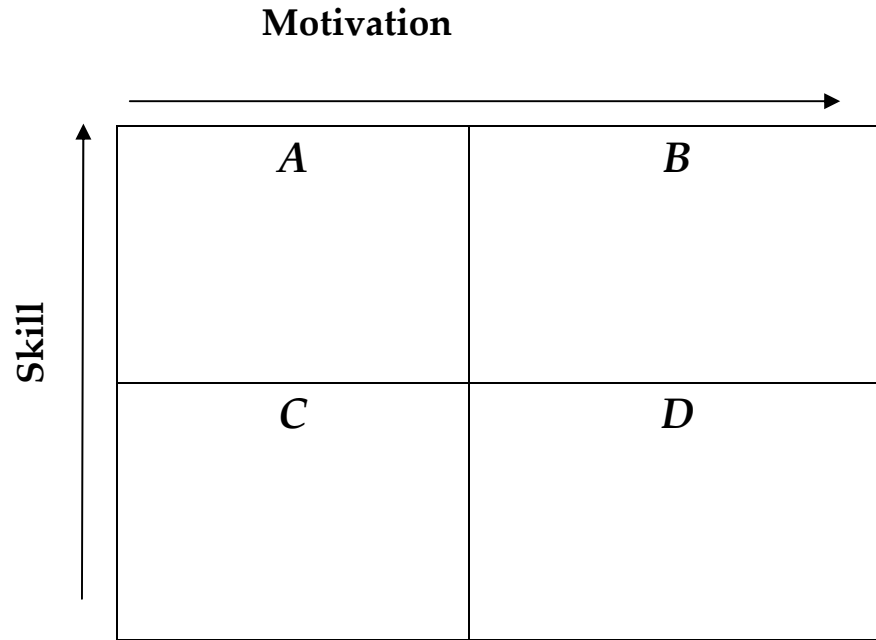
Motivation is a force that impels a person to act or any physiological or psychological process that triggers, sustains or halts a particular behaviour. The word “skill” is used with reference to individuals who are qualified or know their profession or trade.

Having defined these concepts, we will use the exercise on the next page to see how these individual traits (motivation and skill) affect rapport and trust, the supervisory process and the student’s learning.

Exercise

Use the table below by answering the following questions:

- Is it easy or difficult to give feedback to each of our students (A, B, C and D)? For instance, Student A has low motivation but high skills.
- What challenges face the professional who supervises each of these students?



Adapted from Anthony & Gaipman (1993)

To conclude, we recognize that some students show more motivation than others. Likewise, some students are more skilled than others. This exercise is intended to help you identify students' individual differences and adjust the supervisory process to fulfil each one's learning needs.

Your comments _____
