Sources of Information to Support Performance Evaluation

There are several methods of collecting information throughout the placement in order to prepare a complete and well documented evaluation. The following are sources of information that have been reported in the literature. You will note that each method helps to measure different aspects of a student's performance.

Common sources (Gaiptman and Anthony, 1993)

🖋 For each source of information, think of an example where you have used this method or could possibly use it in the future.

1. **Direct observation:** This is the most popular method. It allows the supervisor to gain information on observed actions. The use of this method, on its own, poses a risk that may lead the supervisor to make a rash decision on the student's performance and he may miss essential learning that took place with regards to clinical reasoning and knowledge uptake. This may cause the supervisor to skip over one of the domains of learning such as the cognitive (knowledge) domain. This would lead to a flawed evaluation.

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2. **Discussion following an interaction between a student and a patient/client:** allows the supervisor to evaluate the student's clinical reasoning, particularly if he asks the student what he learned from the situation.

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3. **Discussion about theory:** allows the supervisor to evaluate the student's understanding about theoretical information.

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4. **Discussion on ethical issues:** Allows the supervisor to evaluate the student's attitude and values toward patient/client care.

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5. **Chart/File review:** Allows the supervisor to evaluate the student's ability to record pertinent information, to analyse observations and to decide on a treatment plan.

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6. **Role-playing and patient simulation:** Allow the supervisor to evaluate clinical skills when he wants to prepare the student for a particular situation or when he is unable to observe the student directly.

7. **Case study:** Allows the supervisor to evaluate the student's ability to select appropriate information from a client/patient's chart, organize the information to set priorities and, depending on the case, come up with a treatment plan.

8. **Journaling (student):** Allows the supervisor to gain information on the student's attitude and self-appraisal skills.

9. **Journaling (supervisor):** With regards to the supervisor's journal, it is an excellent tool to record facts and thoughts on the clinical placement. When giving the feedback, the notes serve as a reminder.

Other sources

a) Villeneuve (1994) suggests using **audio or videocassette recording** to encourage the student to evaluate himself. This method allows the following aspects to be measured: physical appearance (clothes, posture, and facial expression), voice (tone, pitch, and wording), gestures (frequency, flow, stiffness), and distance (physical, psychological, emotional).

b) Dolan and Schuler (1995) suggest using a **peer review process.** This method consists of soliciting the opinion of colleagues, who work directly with the student and who follow predefined evaluation criteria provided by the supervisor. It is useful when the clinical site values teamwork, open discussions and participation.

c) **Self-evaluation** is a useful source of information. This method sends a clear message on the importance of dialogue and the student's participation during the evaluation process.

d) **Evaluation by patients/clients,** whether it is formal or informal, can prove to be equally useful, depending on the context.

e) The supervisor can ask the student to provide feedback on his performance as a supervisor. This is called a **bottom-up assessment** and it is an evaluation method that promotes communication and provides the supervisor with areas that can be improved.