



Students' perceptions of meaningful feedback on task-related expertise development in the clinical workplace

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Background

Receiving meaningful feedback is a frequently voiced desire of students in health care rotations. Providing high-quality feedback in the clinical workplace is difficult for supervisors.

Aim: Obtain insight in what students perceive as meaningful feedback in performance situations in the clinical workplace.

Methods

An explorative qualitative multi-centered study:

Three focus groups with undergraduate students, in the clinical phase

- Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, Utrecht, The Netherlands (FVMU)
- Szent Istvan University, Budapest, Hungary (SIU)
- University Medical Center, Utrecht, The Netherlands (UMCU)

Two guiding questions were used:

1. *How should meaningful feedback on your professional development, in the clinical workplace look like?*

and

2. *Which information sources should or could provide this feedback?*

Analysis

To cluster the participants' comments five key categories or patterns of feedback seeking, as described by Ashford were used (see Table 1).

Take home message

This study points out that how performance-relevant information is preferred by students in assessment situations depends on contextual differences in the learning environment.

Results

Meaningful feedback is...	FVMU	SIU	UMCU
Source			
• feedback from a self-reflective feedback provider	X		
• feedback from a person with sufficient task-related expertise	X	X	X
• feedback from a credible person	X	X	X
• feedback from someone with longitudinal insight in students' development (follow up)	X	X	X
• feedback from a trustworthy person	X		X
Method			
• personal feedback instead of feedback to a group	X	X	
• feedback provision in a safe learning environment	X	X	X
• feedback in a one-to-one situation	X		
• verbally provided feedback directly documented by the feedback provider	X		X
• feedback in dialog with argumentation	X	X	X
• feedback aimed at both positive and negative aspects	X	X	X
Topic			
• feedback with clear instructions to improve skills/ knowledge	X	X	X
• feedback (from a supervisor) about student's ability to act unsupervised	X	X	X
• feedback also focused on more generic skills, such as communication and collaboration	X		X
• constructive feedback focused on improvement (follow up), aimed for the next time	X	X	X
• feedback specific and concretely formulated for the task	X	X	X
• feedback not derived from students' self-reflection on the task	X	X	X
Timing			
• feedback directly provided	X	X	X
• feedback based on direct observation		X	X
• feedback based on sufficient observation	X		X
• occasionally the provision of unsolicited feedback	X		
Frequency			
• feedback on multiple occasions from the same supervisor (follow up)	X		X

Table 1: Meaningful feedback as perceived by the participants clustered into the five key aspects or patterns of feedback seeking behaviour

Conclusion

Feedback is considered as an important factor enhancing students' motivation. According to our study in the different, medical and veterinary education, and the different institutes the perceptions of the students on 'what is meaningful feedback and where does it come from' is quite similar.

References:

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3. Ashford SJ, Blatt R, Walle DV. Reflections on the looking glass: A review of research on feedback-seeking behavior in organizations. *Journal of Management*. 2003;29(6):773-99.