

# Assessing Learners Meaningful Evaluations

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Bridges

# Conflict of Interest

## Director

- Pediatric Inpatient Medicine Clerkship
- Medical Student Education Program in Pediatrics

***I have no conflict of interest...***

Except I rely on the faculty's evaluations to compose student grades.

# Objectives

- Understand the value of substantive evaluations
- Characterize meaningful evaluation comments
- Develop an approach to assessing learners and documenting effectively

# What Do Meaningful Comments Offer?

- Complement to a normative/scaled evaluation
  - Numeric ratings often do not distinguish the various dimensions of clinical competence.
  - Written comments should justify the scaled ratings
- Formative Information
  - Gives the learner information about the performance (both strengths and weaknesses).
- Summative Information
  - Gives the stakeholders evidence of the learner's performance

# Roadblocks to writing evaluations



# Objectives

- Understand the value of substantive evaluations
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# What Makes Comments Meaningful?

- Descriptive
- Non-judgmental language
- Behavioral focus (not personality based)
- Specific (not generalized)
- Offer concrete suggestions for the learner to attain a higher level of performance

# ...What Makes Comments Meaningful?

## Descriptive

- Activities are described clearly
- If an adjective is used, then explain what made it so

## Examples

“He wrote great H&Ps.”

*Meaningful*

“His H&Ps were organized, concise, yet complete, containing expanded but appropriate differential diagnoses and accurate plans.”



# ...What Makes Comments Meaningful?

## Non-judgmental

- Avoid labeling a learner as solid, good, excellent
- These labels offer no information about what the individual actually did
- Giving specifics can help clarify what the next step is for the learner

## Examples

“Excellent physician.”

### *Meaningful*

“Clinical decision making is with minimal error, written work is complete and timely and she develops strong rapport with families. Her next step is to advance in supervisory skills.”

# ...What Makes Comments Meaningful?

## Behavioral Focus

- Comment on behaviors, rather than elements of the learner's personality (positive or less so)
- Describe the actions and the effect

## Examples

“Lazy”

*Meaningful*

“The resident arrived 15-20 minutes late routinely, which limited pre-rounding, and led to inaccurate data presentation and decision making on rounds.”

“Pleasant.”

*Meaningful*

“Even in stressful and busy situations, the resident remained unruffled, which lead to an environment where the learners felt comfortable asking questions about patient care.”

# ...What Makes Comments Meaningful?

## Specific

- Talk about discrete actions, not generalizations

## Examples

“Solid clinician.”

*Meaningful:*

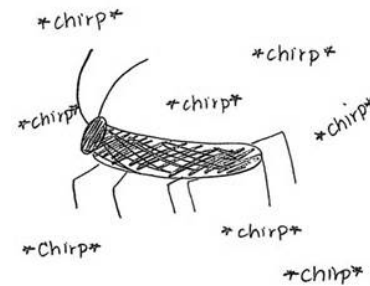
“She makes reasonable clinical decisions with information she has gathered. When others offer additional information, she interprets it appropriately. To advance, she can continue expand her interview skills.”

# ...What Makes Comments Meaningful?

## Suggestions for improvement

- Write about specific domains that will help the learner progress to the next level

## Examples



### *Meaningful:*

“To advance in teaching skills, he can demonstrate physical exam findings at the bedside while on rounds.”

# What Else to Avoid in Written Comments?

- Information not already discussed with the resident verbally
- Anger
- Catharsis
  - “A little bit of my soul died on this rotation.” Resident Physician, 2015

# What's Wrong with This Catch Phrase?

Catch Phrase	Problems
“A pleasure to work with”	Makes the learner feel good, but it is judgmental, not specific, and contains no suggestions for improvement
“A team player”	Might be useful if specific: “He updated the white board on other team member’s patients and called the pt’s PCP without prompting.”
“Needs to read more”	Clarify <i>what</i> they should read: “She was not familiar with UTI management. I suggested she read the AAP UTI practice guideline.”
“Will make a wonderful house officer, physician”	Evaluator’s guess. Offers no information on what the learner did to merit this opinion. Lacks specificity, judgmental (positively, but still!), Includes no suggestions for improvement

# Objectives

- Understand the value of substantive evaluations
- Characterize meaningful evaluation comments
- Develop an approach to feedback and evaluations

# Framework

## 1. Strengths and weaknesses

## 2. RIME: Classified in 4 easily observable domains

- Reporter- gathering of information
- Interpreter-using information appropriately to make clinical decisions
- Manager
- Educator

Pangaro,L., A New Vocabulary and other innovationsAcademic Medicine. Vol. 74. No 11, Nov. 1999

## 3. PRIME+/-

- Professionalism, RIME, strengths and weaknesses

Volpe Holmes, A, et al., Writing Medical Student and Resident Performance Evaluations: Beyond “Performed as Expected”, Pediatrics Vol 133 No. 5. May 2014



# Student X

## Evaluator 1

M. communicated extremely well with families - spoke very directly in appropriate language and really became the point person in his patient's care. He followed up on everything discussed on rounds, took initiative and was a great help to the team.

## Evaluator 2

Highly Satisfactory. It is possible I could be talked into higher if others agree to that.

## Evaluator 3

M.'s enthusiasm and advocacy for patients and families is refreshing. He is an active and adult learner and his bedside manner is impeccable

## Evaluator 4

M. had an excellent performance on the team. He demonstrated excellent interest and initiatives. He has a superior fund of knowledge and was able to synthesize information and he was able to formulate pointed and appropriate questions. His clinical skills were above average. His oral presentations were appropriately detailed and concise. He had excellent interactions with patients and families as well as the medical team.

# Take home points

- Written comments
  - Document the learner's performance
  - Help learner progress to the next stage of training
- Elements of meaningful comments
  - Complement the scaled evaluation
  - Descriptive
  - Focus on the behavior
  - Specific actions that were observed
  - Non-judgmental language
  - Offer ways to improve
- Frameworks to consider when writing comments
  - Strengths and weaknesses, RIME, PRIME +/-
- Take notes on your learners. Don't rely on memory!

Questions?