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:
- 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?
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.

References:

Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaningful feedback in…</th>
<th>FVMU</th>
<th>SIU</th>
<th>UMCU</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General feedback…</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from a self-reflection peer</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feedback from a person with sufficient task-related expertise</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from a credible person</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from someone with longitudinal insight in students’ development (follow up)</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feedback from a networking person</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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.
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Background Receiving adequate feedback while in the clinical workplace is probably the most frequently voiced desire of students in undergraduate health care rotations. Especially in competency-based education, students require high-quality performance-relevant information. In learning environments such as the clinical workplace, this is often difficult for supervisors. To illuminate what high-quality feedback is for students in performance situations, we aimed to obtain in-depth insight in students’ desires of high-quality performance-relevant feedback information in the clinical workplace.

Methods In a qualitative multi-centered study we aimed to identify what high-quality feedback is for students in performance situations at the clinical workplace. Focus groups were conducted among medical and veterinary students of Utrecht University (the Netherlands) and veterinary students at Szent Istvan University (Hungary). The data were analyzed using a qualitative technique.

Results A list of 22 items resulted from open and axial coding of data from three focus groups and a total of 32 participating student with experience of clinical education, grouped in five categories as proposed by Ashford et al. Students across groups considered feedback from clinician supervisors, peers, nurses, patients, family of the patient, paramedics or the patient owners all useful. Most desirable modes of feedback identified were being from a credible, trustworthy supervisor knowing the student well, delivered in a safe environment stressing both strengths and points for improvement. The feedback should be provided immediately upon the observed activity, refer to the ability to act unsupervised, include instructions and anticipate follow-up observation.

Discussion We were struck by the similarity of feedback wishes across institutions, disciplines and countries, but cannot exclude that more disparity exist in yet different contexts. Two of the institutions are currently designing EPA-based workplace curricula. A follow-up study in curricula with EPAs and entrustment decisions in place may reveal yet other student views.