Evaluation and Feedback: Some Advice

Establish Goals and Expectations for the Rotation:

I. For Yourself

    A. Allow the learner to state his/her goals and expectations of you.

    B. Reconcile the learner's goals and expectations with your own and explain to the learner how you will meet these goals and expectations.

        Appropriate – *We will meet at these times on these days to discuss these topics*

        Inappropriate – *I will teach you*

II. For the Learner

    A. Allow the learner to state his/her goals and expectations of him/herself.

    B. Explain to the learner your goals and expectations of him/her; reconcile any differences the learner's and your expectations and goals and come to an agreement.

        Appropriate – *I expect that every morning's presentation will include hospital day#, antibiotic/chemotherapy day# if appropriate, and a SOAP-format presentation*

        Inappropriate – *I expect you will know your patients well*

Timeline of Evaluation and Feedback:

I. On-The-Fly Feedback

    A. Please point out strengths and weaknesses on a daily basis in the context of when it happens.

        Appropriate – *Great job palpating the liver on Mr. Smith's exam today*

        Inappropriate – *Good exam skills on yesterday's rounds*

II. Formally at the Half-Way Point

    A. Discuss with the learner how their performance reconciles with the previously-agreed upon goals and expectations.

        Appropriate – *You are forgetting antibiotic day# in your presentation and your stated plans should be organized by organ system*

        Inappropriate –*You need to work on your presentation skills*

    B. Allow the learner to critique your performance thus far.

III. Formally on the Final Day

    A. Discuss with the learner their overall performance and how they did relative to the previously agreed-upon goals and expectations.

    B. Render a final grade and narrative with the learner present.

    C. Allow the learner to provide feedback about your performance, but only after you have submitted your final grade/narrative.

Finally:

1. When providing negative feedback, please try to sandwich it between positive feedback.

2. Feedback should always be delivered in a respectful, non-threatening manner.

3. Formal Feedback should only be delivered in private.

4. On-The-Fly Feedback is also best delivered in private, if possible.
5. At one sitting (aside from the formal evaluation dates/times), focus on a few areas and be specific rather than discussing every area and being general.
6. When feedback is delivered (aside from the final formal evaluation), you and the learner should agree on a plan of action and a revisit date/time to discuss progress.

Rating Errors

1. *Halo Effect* – The tendency to let someone's exemplary performance in one dimension influence your rating of the person in other dimensions; assuming that good performance in one dimension means the person is also as competent in other dimensions.

2. *Leniency Effect* – The tendency to be somewhat less critical than is appropriate in the evaluation process (i.e. to be too easy and forgiving in assigning ratings).

3. *Harshness Error* – The tendency to be more critical than is appropriate in the evaluation process; the opposite of leniency effect.

4. *Recency Error* – This occurs when the learner's performance at the end of the evaluation period is weighted more heavily in the overall evaluation than is appropriate.

5. *Contrast Effects* – This occurs when a rater lets an extremely strong or weak learner become the standard by which other employees are judged.

6. *Central Tendency* – The evaluator rates everyone as average regardless of performance because of the desire not to appear to harsh or lenient. It can also occur when the evaluator has difficulty rating a student accurately because he has observed the student infrequently or briefly.

7. *First Impression Error* – The tendency of a rater to make an initial favorable or unfavorable judgment about a learner that is not justified by the learner's subsequent performance.

8. *Priming Bias* – The tendency to focus on certain aspects of a learner's performance (often to the exclusion of other important aspects), due to a cue that has directed attention towards these aspects of performance. As a result of this, a rater may overestimate the performance they have been prompted (or primed) to attend to, and underestimate the presence of other performance factors.

9. *Stereotyping Bias* – This occurs when a rater assumes something to be true because the individual being rated belongs to a certain group (e.g. male/female).

10. *Availability Bias* – The tendency to rely on information that is most easily accessed in memory or that is most easily collected or retrieved as "hard" data/documentation.

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