



## REFLECTIONS ON MY STUDENT/TRAINEE FEEDBACK

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- What is going well, and why?

During this session I elected to focus on scrutinising the student's examination technique and constructively feeding back on their performance. This was done on genuine patients with real signs for added interest, whilst giving opportunities for students to develop softer skills in communication and project a model for professional behaviour. The session felt more 'organic' than previous sessions – my teaching agenda was much more flexible and responsive to what the students themselves were doing and asking. It differed from previous sessions where the learning outcomes had been rigidly defined clearly in advance and the sessions rehearsed. This may have contributed to the more relaxed atmosphere that was commented on in feedback. I was also described as 'friendly' which I interpret as meaning I was approachable and that student felt comfortable to ask questions and engage in the session in an interactive manner, creating good conditions for learning. The student who provided feedback made mention of the useful comments I had offered based on their technique, and seemingly had liked the fact that they had received almost instantaneous feedback on their directly observed performance, accompanied by practical pointers for improvement. This clinical teaching method, focussed on task setting, observation and opportune intervention was popular with the student concerned, and I can reflect that it ensured my teaching input was efficiently need-focussed and immediate enough to have impact.

- What could be improved and how could these changes be brought about?

Some students are eager to reinforce their learning with lots of practice and this is something that needs to be balanced against the natural tendency of a tutor to try to maximise the content. It is quite natural, I think, to want to include as much material as possible in a given session in the belief that this is what students will want, but some of my feedback indicates that students may prefer to learn a few select sub-topics well rather than have a more cursory overview of an entire field. I should try to keep in mind that I am by no means at all the sole provider of clinical teaching for my tutees, and in fact serve the purpose of clarifying uncertainties, providing opportunities for rehearsal and fine-tuning of performance, and addressing any gaps as they see them left by their more formal training. I had in fact reflected after earlier sessions that I should focus on narrowing down the remit of my sessions slightly, and this session was one in which I experimented with doing that.

When narrowing a session down to a few specific themes it can be difficult to have confidence that the chosen themes will be of most relevance or utility to the audience. I had already tried the approach of asking students to highlight and prioritise those areas that felt they most wanted clinical tutor input on, with some success, but this session represented a different approach, asking the students to perform and then judging as their tutor where their technique would benefit from input and further development. This called to mind Birch's Four Stages of Competence theory which describes hierarchically the difference between unconscious incompetence and conscious incompetence – it may be that students are less perceptive themselves of the areas that they most need development in.

Designing future sessions to first expose 'improvement areas' and then work on these is something I wish to pick up on more. I need to build time in to sessions to allow meaningful opportunity for students to show me their strengths and weaknesses and for me to make educational interventions that are most directly relevant to them, which students then have a chance to iterate.

- How could the evaluation of your session, and any intended improvements, be communicated to your students/trainees and colleagues, (eg put in study guides annual report to Module Organiser; tell next cohort of students; report at Year Committee)?

I keep in regular email contact with my students – they provide informal feedback on sessions and we discuss the best ways of approaching their learning needs. I suggest strategies for running particular sessions and ask for their opinions. It would however, be useful to hear from a wider group of CTAs and students about the learning styles they find most effective. Some sort of annual forum for CTAs within the SE deanery would be a useful to enable communication and collaboration between trainers and students to promote understanding of patterns of feedback and innovation in teaching methodology. The SEFCE autumn symposium is already in existence, but perhaps the possibility of adding a CTA-specific session on to this could be investigated, where there could be an annual forum to present feedback, promote networking and collaboration of tutors and show case innovation in teaching among CTAs?

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