



“This Rotation Stinks!” Guiding Trainees to Compose High-Quality Comments on Written Evaluations

Cathy Lee-Miller, MD¹ and Vasudha Bhavaraju, MD²

¹University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, Department of Pediatrics

²Phoenix Children’s Hospital



Department of Pediatrics
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

BACKGROUND

- Evaluation and assessment are vital in medical education
- The Accreditation Council of Graduate Medical Education (ACGME) requires training programs to solicit and gather evaluations on faculty and educational experiences
- Trainees do not often receive formal training on how to write helpful evaluation comments
- Literature search revealed several constructs for composing effective comments
- **Purpose: To teach trainees how to compose high quality evaluation comments**

METHODS

- Used the conceptual framework of Kirkpatrick Model of Learning Evaluation
- Created a rubric to compose high quality comments using a combination of constructs found in medical literature
- Designed a workshop to teach pediatric residents/fellows the comment rubric
 - Didactic session: introduced background literature and novel rubric
 - Small group work: participants analyzed anonymized real comments from trainees with associated background scenarios and rewrote the comment using the rubric
 - Post-workshop survey was completed
- Analyzed comments from annual program evaluations prior to workshop and comments re-written during the workshop on adherence to rubric
- Results compared using independent samples T-test

Rubric for writing evaluation comments about faculty

- Specific situation where observation occurred
- Description of strengths/preferred clinical skill/attitude
- Description of what faculty member could do to improve their practice
- The expected effect of change in practice
- Use of the subjunctive mood

RECOMMENDED: Specifies a particular domain (physician, teacher, team leader, person)

RESULTS

Element of comment writing rubric	% comments adhering to rubric, by element	
	2018-2019 Annual Program Review	March 2020 Workshop
Specification of situation/location of teaching	15.67%	65.52%
Description of preferred teaching skill or attitude	43.19%	81.03%
Description of what clinical teachers could do to improve teaching	8.48%	89.66%
The expected outcome of an ideal learning environment	3.35%	56.90%
Subjunctive mood	4.91%	74.14%

Comparison of adherence to comment-writing rubric before and after a targeted workshop

Comments composed during the “Creating Evaluation Comments that Make an Impact” workshop showed higher inclusion of each of the 5 elements of the comment-writing rubric compared to comments composed on the annual program review prior to the workshop. p<0.01 for all elements.

CONCLUSIONS

- The workshop provided a hands-on approach to teach trainees how to write evaluation comments in a professional and constructive way
- Trainees found the workshop useful and learned new skills
- Comments re-written during the workshop were statistically more likely to include elements of the rubric compared to those prior

Limitations:

- Workshop is an artificial setting to practice writing effective comments, may not necessarily translate to changed behaviors on actual evaluations
- Single institution

Next steps:

- Embed the rubric in the annual program evaluation forms to provide trainees with immediately available guidance on best practices
- Measure change in adherence to rubric on actual annual program evaluation comments after interventions
- Adapt workshop to teach faculty to use the rubric on trainee evaluations

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Contact information:
Cathy Lee-Miller MD
Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics
Program Director, Pediatric Hematology/Oncology Fellowship
calee4@wisc.edu

References:

1. ACGME Program Requirements for Graduate Medical Education in Pediatrics. July 2020.
2. van der Leeuw RM, Schipper MP, Heineman MJ, Lombarts KMJM. Residents’ narrative feedback on teaching performance of clinical teachers: Analysis of the content and phrasing of suggestions for improvement. *Postgraduate Medical Journal*. 2016;92(1085). doi:10.1136/postgradmedj-2014-133214
3. Myers KA, Zibrowski EM, Lingard L. A mixed-methods analysis of residents’ written comments regarding their clinical supervisors. *Academic medicine: journal of the Association of American Medical Colleges*. 2011;86(10 Suppl). doi:10.1097/acm.0b013e31822a6fd3
4. Lim DW, White JS. How do surgery students use written language to say what they see? A framework to understand medical students’ written evaluations of their teachers. In: *Academic Medicine*. Vol 90.; 2015. doi:10.1097/ACM.0000000000000895
5. Kirkpatrick DL, Kirkpatrick JD. *Evaluating Training Programs: The Four Levels*; 2008.