



University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

Field Education Program

Field Instructor Training Module Six

Evaluating Student Performance

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Evaluating Student Performance

Evaluation means to examine, appraise, judge and/or assign value.

Performance refers to an action being carried out, completing a function, role and/or task.

All Social Workers act as gate keepers for the profession. However, the Field Instructor is responsible for upholding social work standard and ensuring that the student, who is not yet competent, practice and behave within the standard established by the profession and the school of social work.

During the field planning meetings, students are asked “what is important to you when it comes to supervision?” Most students respond, “Having a field instructor that is open to questions, available and provides constructive feedback.”

Feedback:

- **Constructive Feedback:** is information specific, issue focused and based on observation. Constructive feedback can be positive and/or negative.
 - Positive feedback is input on a job well done.
 - Negative feedback is information on efforts that need improvement. Negative feedback does not mean “terrible”; it means the outcome could/should be better.
- Framing negative feedback in a supportive and sensitive manner can be referred to “Constructive Critical Feedback”.

Elements of Effective Feedback (Dettlaff, 2003)

- **Clear expectation for performance**
Without guidelines on what the field instructor expects, students may feel unfairly criticized.
- **Field Instructor’s observation of student**
Negative feedback is easier to accept if it comes from the observer rather than comments from others.
- **Timeliness**
As noted in the supervision section, feedback is more effective when provided immediately after the action of concern. Procrastination may cause unnecessary stress for the field instructor and student.
- **Regularity**
If feedback is regular it will be expected and more open to discussion.

- **Empathy**
If a student feels understood, they will be more willing to accept feedback.
- **Balance**
There should be a balance between both positive and negative feedback, beginning the discussion with the positive elements of performance.
- **Clear and Concise**
Feedback should be clear, concise and easy to understand. Specific concrete suggestions for alternative approaches should be provided.
- **Follow Up**
When suggestions for improvement are made, the student should be provided the opportunity to incorporate the information into practice.
- **Know your student**
Each individual responds a different way to feedback and is best received after a trusting supportive environment is established.

Formal Written Evaluation

- The Field Education Office will send Field Instructors a link to access the online evaluation (please refer to the Timeline for dates)
- Student and Field Instructor:
 - When the Field Instructor receives the link to access the online evaluation, a copy of the evaluation should be printed off for both the student and the Field Instructor.
 - The student and Field Instructor should each complete the paper evaluation independently and then discuss the results. This allows the student to reflect on their progress and offers an opportunity for the student and Field Instructor to compare thoughts and have a dialog about the student's performance.
 - Once the student and Field Instructor have discussed the evaluation, the Field Instructors submits the results online.

Formal Evaluation Conference – Site Visit

- Refer to the Timeline for site visit dates

- The site visits are held at the field placement location.
- During the site visit, the Field Liaison will meet with both the student and the Field Instructor separately, and then together. The liaison's separate meetings allow for sensitive information to be exchanged or questions to be asked.
- The site visit allows the Field Liaison the opportunity to discuss the student's progress/learning experiences with the Field Instructor and student, address any concerns that may have arisen and to answer questions.
- During the course of the internship, if issues or concerns arise, additional meetings with the Field Liaison can be arranged.

Dettlaff, Alan J. (2003). From Mission to Evaluation: A Field Instructor Training Manual (CSWE:Alexandria, VA).