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How to Provide Feedback to Students during Occupational Therapy Fieldwork

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Section 1: Introduction



Learning objective:

1. To introduce feedback and provide a working definition.

Feedback is complex and may be difficult to provide and receive. However, it is vital to the success of students during their fieldwork experiences. It involves utilizing strong communication and effective critical thinking skills.^{7,9,18} For occupational therapy students who have received most of their education within a classroom setting, their fieldwork experiences involve new environments where they are putting their new knowledge and skills into motion. Within this new environment, feedback plays a crucial role in alerting students to their strengths, areas for further development, and specific ways they can progress into competent, entry level practitioners.

Boud & Molloy identify feedback as “*a process whereby learners obtain information about their work in order to appreciate the similarities and differences between the appropriate standards for any given work, and the qualities of the work itself, in order to generate improved work*” (p. 6).⁶ In other words, feedback is meant to help the student improve the quality of his/her work by making positive changes to meet expectations. As illustrated in Figure 1.1 below, there are appropriate standards for a given work and the quality of the work itself. The middle

section, where the two circles overlap, is where we want our student's work to be. We want them to meet the appropriate standards while still maintaining their own originality and creativity. However, when there is a discrepancy between the appropriate standards and the quality of work, giving feedback can and should help to reach the optimal point of performance.⁶

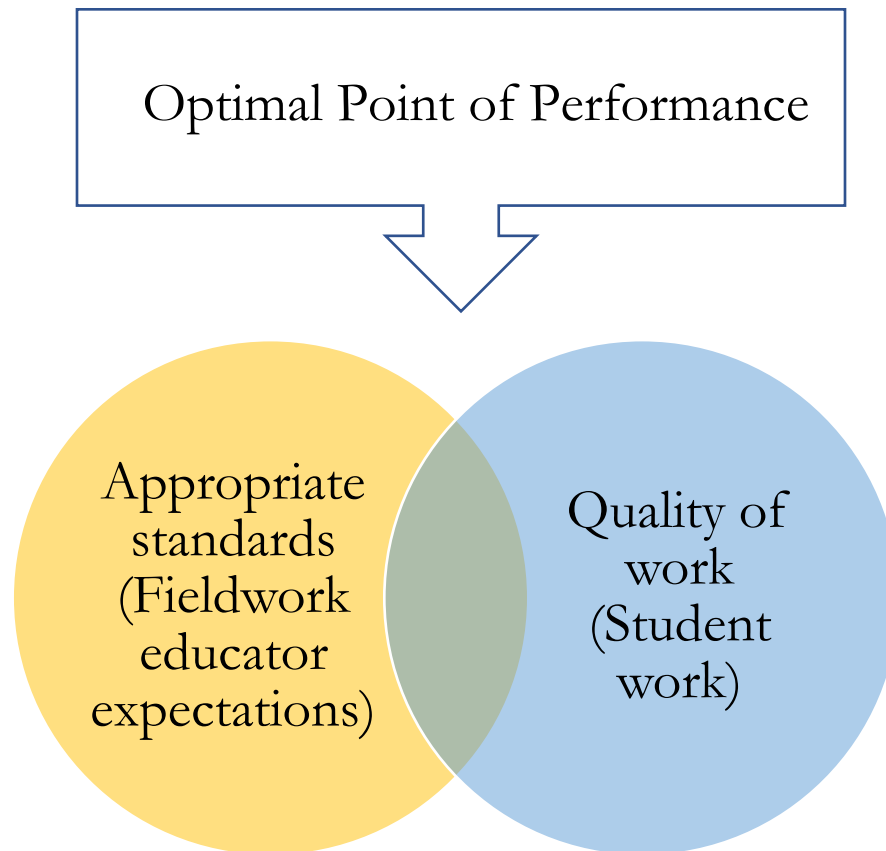


Figure 1.1

Within occupational therapy and occupational therapy education, there is evidence to show that students value feedback.^{1,9,11,18} Feedback is identified as a critical factor during any fieldwork experience by both fieldwork educators and by students. Students recognize feedback as a necessity and want specific instruction with positive face-to-face feedback.¹⁸ Students see an increased value in feedback specifically when expectations are clearly defined and the feedback is presented in a manner

that is supportive and facilitates further and future success.^{11,18} It may also be helpful to identify the student's preferred learning style as well as his/her preferred method for receiving feedback.

When feedback becomes a collaborative approach, as compared to a one-way flow of communication, it helps to foster a more trusting and open relationship between the student and the fieldwork educator.⁶ This reciprocal type of feedback is valuable to both the student and the fieldwork educator. The American Occupational Therapy Association's (AOTA) Commission on Education states that students need to be engaged in the learning process by being aware of their performance throughout the fieldwork experience.³ The use of feedback is one way of keeping students engaged in the learning process and making them aware of their performance in a variety of ways. Without feedback, there is no reassurance of right or wrong, and without this, learning does not occur.⁹ The AOTA's Commission on Education Guidelines state that formal evaluation is most beneficial when completed on a weekly basis in a written format, giving the student specific suggestions based on behaviors that the supervisor has observed. In addition, the Commission on Education feels that weekly supervision logs help both supervisors and students reflect on their weekly discussions.³ A sample weekly feedback form can be found on AOTA's website.

The Self-Assessment Tool for Fieldwork Educator Competency (SAFECom) states that in order to be a qualified, competent fieldwork educator, one must be able to give constructive, specific feedback, have good communication skills, and respond efficiently to student concerns.⁴ The SAFECom can be found on AOTA's website. This illustrates the support from AOTA regarding the use of feedback for students.⁴

By providing daily and/or weekly verbal and/or written feedback, student satisfaction and perception of success increases. Regular feedback encourages the participation of actively engaged and dedicated fieldwork educators and students. Additionally, it opens communication between the

student and the fieldwork educator.¹ This type of feedback positively influences the commitment to successful student learning outcomes. This shows students that they are supported and helps to facilitate higher quality performance.¹¹ The AOTA's Commission on Education Guidelines supports the importance of feedback and the SAFECom highlights that clinicians need to be competent and comfortable giving and receiving feedback from students to be competent fieldwork educators.⁴ De Beer & Martensson conclude that "giving constructive critical feedback on the students' clinical reasoning skills seems to be key to their development as entry-level occupational therapists" (p. 263).⁹ The authors discovered that feedback, whether confirmative or constructive, was valuable to the learning experience.

As occupational therapy practitioners, we want students to be successful during their fieldwork experiences because they are the next cohort of professionals to enter our workforce. They will be our future colleagues and represent our profession. Fieldwork provides students with the "opportunity to carry out professional responsibilities" in a clinical setting (p. S75).² Feedback helps students recognize whether they are or are not upholding those professional responsibilities.

In the case of fieldwork, students are presenting their work in the clinical environment. The fieldwork educator and the student must identify the similarities and differences between the student's work and the fieldwork supervisor's expectations. Some questions you as a fieldwork educator should ask yourself are:

- What did the student do correctly and what do they need to improve upon?
- What are my expectations?
 - Did I make them clear?
 - How do I know that I made them clear?

In summary, feedback is extremely important to the student's success during fieldwork and it is your responsibility as the fieldwork educator to provide as much quality feedback as possible. Feedback needs to be provided correctly to be effective. This manual will serve to guide you, the fieldwork educator, on giving feedback to students during fieldwork in occupational therapy. It will introduce you to the basic concepts and definitions surrounding feedback as well as one of its most important tenants, reflective knowledge building. The manual will discuss the significance of self-reflection, peer review, and different factors that influence feedback such as emotions and sociocultural factors. Additional resources are provided throughout the manual. There are also integrated learning activities and strategies to try. These are accentuated using a text box throughout the manual. See the key below to help identify integrated learning activities and strategies. None of these are exclusive to the given section but fit best with that particular material. All activities are related to feedback and are appropriate to try. You should use your clinical judgement as a fieldwork educator to determine what best fits the unique situation. Finally, at the end of each section will be several salient points that summarizes the chapter along with the page numbers where it can be found in the manual.

Key

All integrated learning activities and strategies will be located within a box like this one.

Salient points from Section 1

- Feedback is meant to help the student improve the quality of his/her work by making positive changes to meet expectations. [p.1]
- When feedback becomes a collaborative approach, as compared to a one-way flow of communication, it helps to foster a more trusting and open relationship between the student and the fieldwork educator.⁶ [p.3]
- The AOTA's Commission on Education Guidelines supports the importance of feedback and the SAFECOM highlights that clinicians need to be competent and comfortable giving and receiving feedback from students to be competent fieldwork educators.⁴ [p.4]

Section 2: Some Thoughts on Feedback



Learning objectives:

1. To discuss the challenges and misconceptions about feedback.
2. To highlight the gaps between student and educator thoughts on feedback.

There are several common beliefs about feedback that merit discussion. This section does not encompass all ideas but seeks to identify beliefs that are not consistent with current thinking about the topic.

Common beliefs

#1: Feedback is a one-way flow of information from a knowledgeable person to a less knowledgeable person.⁶

Fact: Feedback should be given and received by both parties involved, in this case students and educators. There will always be more knowledgeable and less knowledgeable individuals in every situation. In this particular situation of fieldwork, it can be difficult to create a reciprocal feedback relationship where the perception is that the supervisor has the “power” over whether the student passes the fieldwork. However, each person brings a different perspective and prior experiences that can be used as learning opportunities. By accepting the belief that feedback can only go in one direction significantly limits the possibility of new knowledge. By accepting that feedback is a two-way

flow of information, more opportunities are available for collaboration and learning.^{5,6} It is important to engage the student in a discussion about the importance of two-way feedback at the start of the fieldwork. This sets a precedent for providing and receiving feedback during the fieldwork experience making the student and supervisor more open to the existence of feedback. In addition, this allows the fieldwork supervisor to act a role model, showing the student how to accept feedback.

Example: The fieldwork supervisor tells a student that he/she is not correctly positioning him/herself to complete a transfer, making the transfer unsafe. The supervisor has provided this feedback verbally several times however the student is not following through. The fieldwork supervisor does not know how to make the point clearer and the student is confused and not meeting expectations. The student says “I’m not sure what you mean? Can you show me?” The fieldwork supervisor learns from this feedback that the student is a hands-on learner and needs to be shown how to perform the transfer. The student learns the technique and performs transfers correctly and safely.

#2: Once feedback is given the process is complete.⁶



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Fact: Feedback is meant to promote a positive change. This is called reflective knowledge building and will be further discussed in subsequent pages. The job of feedback is not complete with an exchange of information. Using the above cartoon as an example, it is not enough for the man to say

“bad dog.” This is not specific and does not tell the dog what he did wrong and/or how to fix it. Yes, the feedback was given, but it was very vague; the process is not complete. This works the same for students. The student must have the knowledge, opportunity, and ability to use the feedback to improve his/her work.^{5,6,11,18} The ideal process for feedback is illustrated below in Figure 2.1.

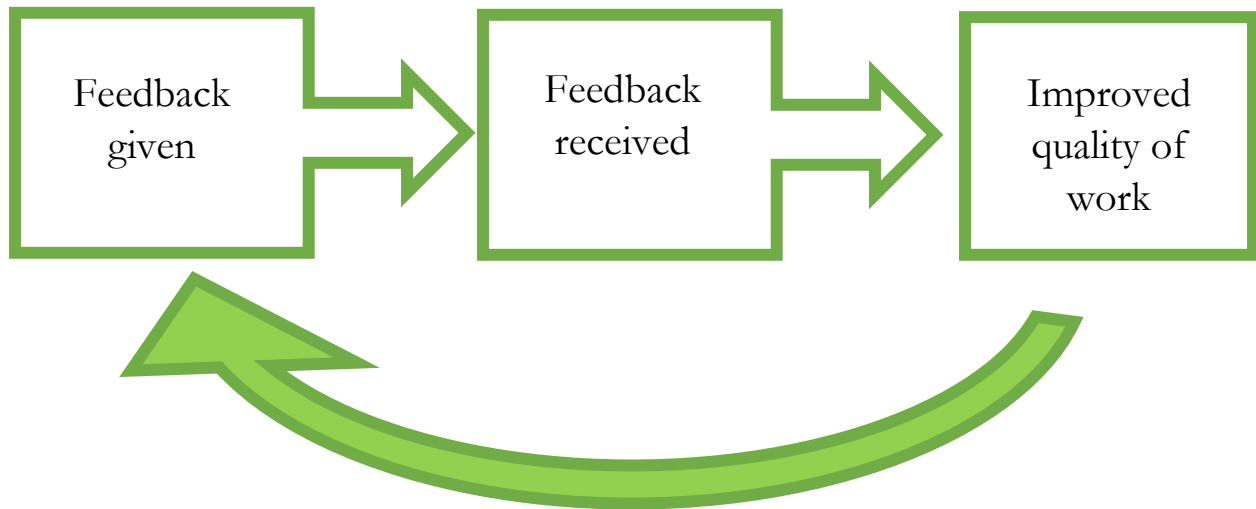
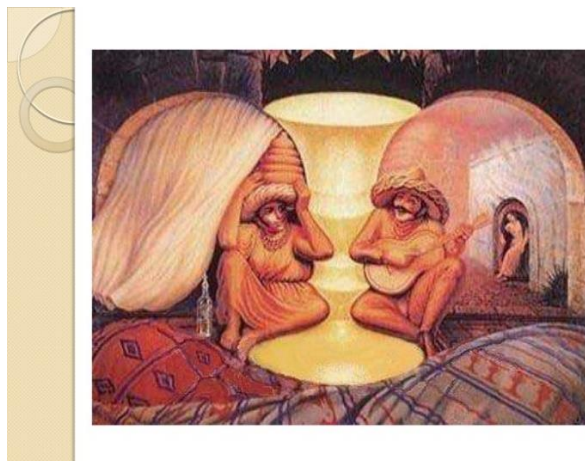


Figure 2.1¹⁶

In Figure 2.1, feedback is given by one individual and received by another. This needs to result in improved quality of work. Feedback does not end in telling or after the first two boxes. The third box, the improved quality of work, must result for feedback to be effective.^{11,18} The long arrow connecting improved quality of work to feedback given shows that feedback is a continuous process. It is important to note that students do not always have the skills and knowledge needed to act on the feedback that is given. This would render effective feedback ineffective if the student does not know how to act upon it. If this is the case, feedback needs to be given in a different way. As a fieldwork educator, you need to determine if your student understands the feedback.

Example: The student returns from a treatment session with a patient. When asked if the student checked with the nurse before treating the patient, the student responds no. The student is given feedback that he/she needs to check with the nurse before seeing a patient to ensure that the patient is medically appropriate for his/her occupational therapy session. The loop does not end here. An ending here would be an ending with the giving and receiving of information.^{6,11,18} As discussed, this is not enough. The student must put this into action. The supervisor instructs the student to make a list of all the items that need to be checked before treating a patient and demonstrate doing these to his/her supervisor. For example, the list might include checking the chart, reviewing the plan with the supervisor, checking with the nurse, etc.

#3: Feedback is generally perceived as helpful.⁶



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Fact: This picture is all about perception. Some people will see one thing and some people will see another. Some of us see an old man and an old woman looking at each other. Some of us see a man playing a guitar and a woman holding bowls on her head. Both are correct. This translates to feedback. Not everyone perceives feedback in the same way. Some students will see feedback as an attack or feel that it is not helpful. They feel it is meant to criticize their work. Feedback often has no impact or a negative impact on these students, irrespective of the quantity or quality of feedback that is actually

given. Some students feel judged and offended. Some feel like feedback is worthless and unnecessary.^{6,11,18} Some of you may be thinking, if my student feels this way, what do I do? It is likely that there is a bigger issue at hand and this may require some exploration through discussion into the student's feelings about his/her capabilities within the setting. This is something you will want to involve the student's academic institution in if it is negatively impacting performance.

Some students actively seek out feedback, wanting to know the correct answer and ensure that their performance is perfection. Some students feel that educators do not give enough feedback while others feel they receive too much feedback and are overwhelmed. Educators often feel they give feedback more than is recognized by the student. They feel feedback is always helpful and always impactful on learning irrespective of the content. Some educators do not want to give critical feedback for fear of retaliation from the student so they settle for blanket statements, such as "good job" or "explain more" that are not, ultimately, very helpful.^{5,6,7,11,12,13,18}

Example: The feedback given to the student is: "You need to improve your hand splinting skills." The helpless student might become sad and emotional. The defensive student might deny this accusation saying that his/her hand splints are great or deflect the blame to the supervisor for not teaching proper splint fabrication techniques. The perfectionist student will spend a significant amount of time working on splinting but may forsake other areas due to focus on improving this skill.

#4: The more feedback that is given, the more effective it is.⁶

Fact: An increased volume or frequency of feedback does not improve the quality and/or meaningfulness of the feedback that is provided. Often, students have trouble recognizing what is feedback and report that they are not being given enough. If students are given too little feedback, they do not make any positive changes. If they are given too much feedback they feel overwhelmed and have difficulty prioritizing what to work on.^{5,6,11,18}

Example: A student writes a treatment note and the educator finds multiple errors throughout the note. The educator may pick a few salient points to help the student improve his/her work rather than writing corrections all over the note. This will help the student know what to focus on to improve his/her work.

Salient points from Section 2

- Feedback is a two-way flow of information. [p.7-8]
- The job of feedback is not complete with the exchange of information, but rather it is a continuous process that helps improve the quality of the work. [p.8-10]
- Quality of feedback is more important than the quantity [p.11-12]

Section 3: What is Reflective Knowledge Building?



Learning objective:

1. To define the concept of reflective knowledge building and understand its importance in relation to feedback during fieldwork.

Reflective knowledge building is the process of further developing learned information. This process consists of two steps: 1, reflection, and 2, making changes based on reflection. Thus, reflective knowledge building is providing a student with the opportunity to learn something after completing an assessment of some information. This information may be from a self-assessment, from a peer, from an educator, from the environment, or from another source. The overall concept focuses on learning from multi-source feedback; not just receiving it but using it to build knowledge that the student did not have before.⁶

Now that we have some preliminary information about feedback and reflective knowledge building, let's examine the flow chart below to help with framing the thought process of reflective knowledge building and feedback.

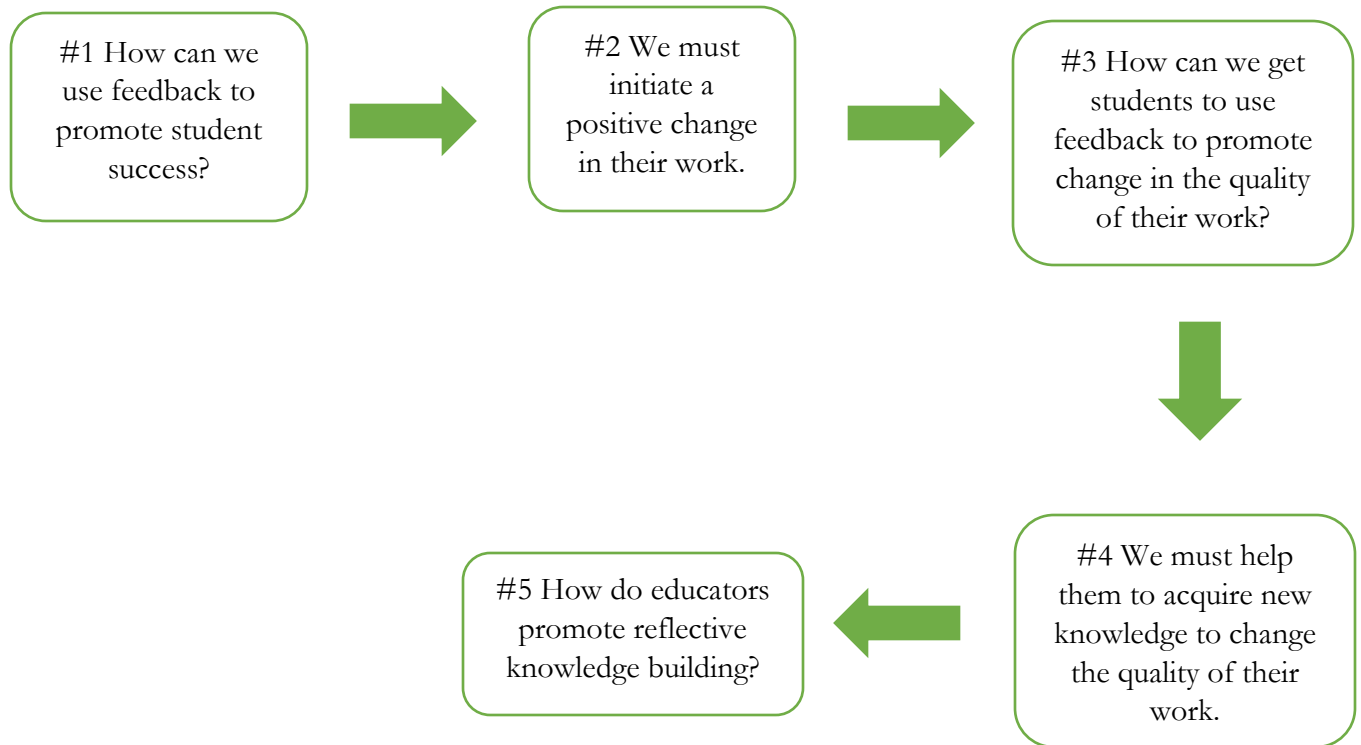


Figure 5.1

Figure 5.1 explores some questions that lead us into reflective knowledge building.

Reflective knowledge building consists of two concepts:^{1,6,10}

1. Students need the opportunity to reflect on their own work using feedback from multiple inputs/sources (i.e. self, peers, educators, environment, etc.).
2. Students then need the opportunity to use the results of the evaluative process to identify gaps in understanding and make changes.

You will recall that feedback is a process where learners gain information about their work in comparison to a set standard to improve the quality of that work. Once the learner has gained the

information, he/she must reflect upon this information, which is step 1. Then the learner must be able to use the information to make a change, which is step 2.⁶

In step 1, the key words are opportunity and reflect. It is not enough for the student to read the feedback but he/she must have the opportunity to reflect and build an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the produced work. In addition, it is important that feedback be well rounded and come from multiple sources. In step 2, the word opportunity appears again. The student needs to put what he/she learned from step 1 into action to make a positive change. It is not enough to receive feedback. The feedback must result in building of knowledge to be effective. You will know if feedback is effective because it will create a change in student's ability to execute a particular skill. If no new learning occurs, then the feedback was not effective.^{5,6,11}

Think of an instance where you were given feedback, either from the environment or another individual. Orally or in writing, explain the two concepts of reflective knowledge building to see if the feedback that you were given promoted a positive change. What was helpful about the feedback you received? What worked and what didn't work? Why didn't the feedback work if no change occurred? How can you apply this to a fieldwork supervisor situation?

Case example of educator to student feedback

Joanne is an occupational therapy student completing her level II fieldwork in an acute care hospital setting. Joanne has just completed her first evaluation and was observed by her supervisor. Her supervisor gives her feedback on her evaluation. Joanne's supervisor states that her evaluation was too lengthy and she engaged in more conversation than intervention during the session. Joanne's supervisor states that Joanne needs to do a better job managing her time during the evaluation to be more effective. Joanne needs to use her reflective knowledge building to improve upon this. Step 1 is

to reflect upon the feedback given. Joanne needs to identify what information she received from her evaluation. She needs to identify what information she gained that was necessary and what is not necessary for her to complete her evaluation. Step 2 is to use the results to make a change. Joanne needs to identify how, during her next evaluation, she will get the information that she needs, while better managing her time and still promoting a healthy patient-therapist relationship through conversation. Joanne practices role playing with her supervisor to learn how to politely keep the patient on track to complete the evaluation in a timely manner.

Case example of student to fieldwork educator feedback

Andy has been an occupational therapist for three years and he works in an outpatient pediatric clinic. Andy is currently supervising a student during her level II fieldwork. Andy's student is starting the 9th week of her fieldwork rotation. She asks to have a meeting with Andy. During the meeting, the student provides feedback to Andy stating that she would like more opportunities to speak with other colleagues regarding the clients they are treating. Andy's student has been very successful during her level II rotation with the kids but Andy was worried that his student was not ready to speak to other healthcare professionals in a professional capacity regarding patients. He notes that he has been monopolizing this area and taking care of those tasks for his student. Andy needs to use his reflective knowledge building. Step 1 is to reflect upon the feedback given. Andy's student feels that he is not giving her opportunities to discuss client cases with other healthcare professionals. He will discuss this with his OT colleagues to see what their strategies are. Step 2 is to make a change. Andy realizes that he does not know how his student would do because he has not given her a chance. Andy has his student accompany him to a meeting with other healthcare professionals where they collaborate on what will they want to discuss. Andy allows his student to lead the discussion for OT but he is there to add any details.

Additionally, you may be thinking, what are some ways that I, as an educator, can ensure that my feedback leads to reflective knowledge building? Try some of these activities.

Ask the student to rephrase your feedback as he/she understands it. This is also known as the teach-back method or strategy. Prior to the student making any revisions, you can identify if he/she understands your comments.^{5,6} For example, a student may receive feedback that he/she is not appropriately grading the interventions for the patient. The student needs to rephrase this to show that he/she understands. The student may respond that he/she is making the interventions too easy/too hard for the patient and they need to work harder to find the patient's just right challenge.

Give the student an opportunity to rewrite their assignment (i.e. progress note, discharge summary, etc.) after receiving comments. This allows the student to demonstrate that he/she understands the comments and learning has occurred. This is synonymous with completing a second draft. By rewriting the assignment, the student must reflect upon the feedback and make judgements about his/her work in order to create a change. This sounds like the definition of feedback. The act of rewriting the work will give the student the opportunity to make changes to the current work to meet expectations.⁶

Sequence assignments so that the feedback information that you provide is directly applicable to the following assignment. Having assignments that build on one another promote better student understanding.⁶

Students can also participate in small group discussion with their peers (if they are available at the site). Another student may understand your comments more accurately and be able to connect with your student.⁶

Salient points from Section 3

- Reflective knowledge building is the process of developing learned information through reflection and making changes based on that reflection
 - Step 1: Reflection on the student's own work using feedback from multiple sources
 - Step 2: Using the results of the evaluative process to identify gaps in understanding and make changes [p.14-16]

Section 4: How to Develop Student Self-Reflection



Learning objective:

1. To promote the development of skills of eliciting self-reflection from the student.
2. To understand the influence of self-reflection on feedback.

Learners are always generating internal feedback. This is occurring consistently as the student creates any type of work, however, it is likely a subconscious act. This is the starting point for evaluative judgement initiated by the student. Since self-reflection is not always recognized by the student, it is important that it is supported, encouraged, and modeled by the educator. However, the educator must be proficient at eliciting or modeling self-reflection. This is vital to student success and effective feedback. The fieldwork educator needs to be a role model for self-reflection through self-explaining and be able to prompt the student to recognize his/her own self-reflection.⁶

Self-reflection is a category of feedback that is a mix of the student's own goals and what he/she thinks the educator is looking for (what he/she presumes the expectations to be). By initiating this process first, the student will be more equipped to utilize teacher feedback. Self-explaining helps the student identify gaps in his/her knowledge.⁶ Self-reflections are vital to creating relationships

between the individual's insights and real-world experiences. These reflections promote the personal growth of the student, hopefully creating a positive change in his/her produced work.¹⁴

Encourage self-explaining by having students create criteria for evaluating their own performance.

For example, if the task is writing a SOAP (Subjective, Objective, Assessment, Plan) note, the student first needs to identify what meets expectations. He/she should create a list of what needs to be in a SOAP note. For example, the "S" needs to be subjective and relevant to the treatment session. The "O" needs to be objective and indicate what occurred in the session using measurable qualifiers. The student can continue this process for each section and include sections such as clarity, organization, spelling, grammar, etc. The student can use a scale to indicate if he/she fulfilled these sections all the time, sometimes, or not at all within his/her work. This will give the student criteria to refer to so that he/she meets expectations every time through self-reflection before requiring educator intervention.

By having students complete this, they can set their own goals and evaluate their own progress in achieving them. The educator can then give feedback on the assignment as well as the self-evaluation.⁶

In order for self-reflection to be influential on the learning process, the student must be an active participant in this process. Without active participation, the student will not reflect at all. Even if the student does participate in the self-reflection, discussion, and questioning, he/she must make a change for learning to occur.^{9,17}

With this in mind, how do we know that the student is learning from the feedback provided? The easy answer is if the student went from not meeting expectations to meeting expectations, then we know a change was made and the feedback was effective. Nevertheless, how exactly does that process happen?

First the student must decode the feedback messages.

Rewrite/reword the recommendations prior to making the revisions.^{6,12,17} For example, the fieldwork supervisor may write “there is too much fluff in this note. I’m not sure what actually happened.” The student can reword this by saying “You are saying that I have unnecessary information in my note and I need to be more succinct so that other professionals understand the patient’s progress towards his/her goals.”

Identifying the discrepancies between the feedback, the expectation, and his/her own work in writing is one way to ensure that this occurs.⁶ Students can use a chart like the one shown below to do this. The work with the feedback given should equal the expectation.

Expectation	Student work	Feedback given	Changes made?	Rationale

To promote unfiltered and nonjudgmental self-reflection, ask that the student keep a journal of his/her experiences, questions, comments, feelings, thoughts, etc. Set aside a time each week to review some of these and give the student an opportunity to share.^{6,17,18} Make sure that the student is not simply telling you what happened but that they are also reflecting on it. You will want to pose probing questions to elicit this response, either orally or in writing. Ask the student about his/her personal response and feelings to the event/interaction. Tell the student to relate this to past experiences. Ask about what challenged him/her or changed his/her way of thinking.^{6,17}

Salient points from Section 4

- Self-reflection is internal feedback that mixes the students' own goals and what he/she thinks the expectations are. [p.21]
- In order for self-reflection to be effective, the student must be an active participant in the process [p.22]
- It is important for fieldwork educators to model self-reflection so that the student can make appropriate evaluative judgements. [p.21]

Section 5: How to Manage Emotions and Sociocultural Factors



Learning objective:

1. To define the impact that emotions have on the feedback process.
2. To provide the educator with the best practice for managing emotions while being effective at providing feedback.
3. To identify the emotional dimensions of feedback.
4. To suggest some self-prompts for educators to follow to ensure they are achieving their desired outcome.
5. To address the sociocultural considerations that play a role in the giving and receiving of feedback and the effective use of feedback.

Emotions play a large role in receiving and giving feedback. Emotions often produce the most hesitation about how to approach the style of communication we wish to use when giving feedback.⁶ For example, we want to avoid extreme emotions, such as a student feeling sad and helpless as well as angry and defensive. As educators we want to make sure that we are getting our point across in a matter-of-fact way that also connects with the student. It is worth acknowledging that this is difficult to do. Every situation and every student is different. However, there are some guidelines and

suggestions to make this an easier process to handle. First, let us address some different types of learners.

Educators encounter both poor performing and high performing students. Students who are aware of their poor performance and want to improve typically take feedback well as they recognize the need for knowledge building. In contrast, learners who are performing poorly may have overinflated self-perception or think they are doing better than they actually are. These students may not take constructive feedback well.⁶

On the other hand, high performing students who are able to appreciate and recognize the quality of their work recognize feedback as helpful. However, some high performing students may be overly critical and underrate their performance. These students tend to seek feedback from the educator more persistently as they want each and every assignment to be absolutely perfect.⁶

How can we mediate these difficult situations to make feedback effective? The success or lack of success of feedback is determined by the learner's view of competency and capacity to change.

For many people, dealing with others' emotions is uncomfortable. Sometimes, we resort to the feedback sandwich. We make a sandwich of two positive and one negative comment, using the positive comments to soften the intensity of the negative comment.^{5,6} This is unproductive and does not result in a positive change unless the comments are meaningful and specific.⁶ Students often ignore the bread of the sandwich or the positive comments and they hold onto the meat or area identified as needing improvement. Students typically see the areas of need for improvement as having done something wrong that cannot be fixed. It immediately becomes a negative source of feedback rather than an opportunity to improve the quality of work to meet expectation. However, if the feedback sandwich is used with the appropriate content and in the appropriate context, using specific and meaningful comments, the likelihood of success using this method is higher.^{5,6,17}

Another important component of effective feedback is the use of “I” statements. This is valuable for both the student and fieldwork supervisor to utilize when expressing his/her opinions and/or beliefs. The “I” limits the probability of the other person being defensive as the communicator is owning his/her own feelings. Rather than placing blame on the other individual, the “I” statement helps express one’s own feelings and he/she can then tactfully state the problems and/or how they can be solved.⁶

Boud & Molloy created a framework that highlights the emotional dimensions to consider when providing feedback and how educators can prompt themselves to ensure that they have completed each task.⁶ This is relevant because feedback elicits an emotional response. This response is usually symbiotic as the emotional response is dependent on the type, tone, and content of the feedback.⁶ For example, the educator should provide the student with the purpose of feedback as a tool to help the learner improve performance by explaining the role of feedback as well as the role of the student and educator. See table below.

Dimensions to consider when providing feedback	Educator self-prompts
Orient students to purpose of feedback	Have I briefed the learner/s on role of feedback, and my own role in helping the learner to see how they can improve? Have I highlighted the traps of ‘vanishing feedback’ (when the educator neglects to raise an importance performance issue for fear of eliciting a negative reaction from the student) and my commitment to generating strategies together that can be taken forward?

Providing opportunities for learners to solicit feedback	Have I extended this invitation at the start of the unit/placement? Do I continue to prompt the learner to ask what they would like help on? What does the student want me to focus on when I watch them perform a task or when I read their submitted work?
Making clear expectations of learner self-evaluation as part of the feedback exchange	Have I clearly explained this expectation and the rationale for the value of self-evaluation? Have I expressed to learners that it is okay to make mistakes in self-judgement or to have a mismatch in internal and external feedback?
Continuity of learner-educator relationship	Is there a sustained learner-educator relationship so that I can observe subsequent task performances and close the loop? Is there more likely to be trust built when the learning relationship can develop over time and we both learn the tendencies and characteristics of each other?
Opportunities for repeat task performance	Was the student able to use the feedback, and have I commented on the extent to which they have achieved the goals set in this subsequent performance?

Table 5.1 (p. 64-65)⁶

Some other dimensions of feedback to consider are listed in the following table as well as some educator prompts to use to ensure that the learner gets the maximum benefit of the feedback. For example, when considering the location of feedback, it is probably best to select a quiet area where the student has the opportunity to initiate a discussion following feedback compared to a crowded, busy, public area where the student may feel uncomfortable.

Dimensions to consider	Educator self-prompts
Sources of external feedback	Who is in the best position to provide feedback to the learner? Who will best strengthen the 'performance picture' for the learner?
Mode of information exchange	What will be the most effective mode for the learner? What can written feedback achieve that verbal cannot?
Location of feedback exchange	Where is the best place for engagement in feedback? Where will the learner feel 'safest'? Where will the message be best received?
Timing of feedback	Shall I give feedback at the time of performance? Is there any value in feedback at the end of the placement?
Information flow	Who did most of the talking? Did we respond to each other's input?
Power/positioning dynamics	How did I position myself in relation to the student? Did I use inclusive/encouraging language? Did I use verbiage that the student felt unable to contest? Did I allow enough time for student responses or questions? Did the student lose face in front of a wider audience through the feedback process? What was my body language conveying to the learner?
Educator responsiveness to student input	How did I respond to students' questions/comments?
Content	What areas did my comments focus on? Was there an emphasis on how to improve performance in relation to standards of good work?
Specific supporting data	What specific behavior did I refer to? Did I ensure that I was commenting on aspects of work and behavior, and NOT the person?

	Did I at any point provide broad brush generalizations that are unlikely to affect capacity to do better future work?
Strategies for improvement	Once deficits were identified, did I make suggestions for how to improve the work? What strategies for improvement did we devise? Did the student think that these were achievable?
Summarizing/clarification for shared meaning	Did I check that the student shared or understood my analysis? Were we on the same page? If it was a verbal feedback episode, did I suggest that the student make a written record of the key take-home messages, for reasons of cognitive load and to provide a reference point for the next performance discussion.

Table 5.2 (p. 65-67)⁶

Try some of these self-prompts from the tables shown above. For example, during my orientation to the fieldwork site which might include a tour of the facility, tutorial on documentation, and a general overview of expectations, did I educate the student on feedback? Did I tell the student when he/she can expect feedback? Did I explain my role and the student's role in feedback? Did I give the student an opportunity to ask questions about feedback? These are just some of the things you will want to include to introduce the idea of feedback to the student.

A major factor in balancing emotions is to build a trusting and honest educator-student relationship. If the educator and student are able to build a relationship with strong communication and honesty, the effects of feedback are much more positive and the student is better able to handle

the implications of the feedback. It is much more frequent that students demonstrate reflective knowledge building when a strong educator-student relationship is present.⁶ A strong fieldwork educator lends him/herself to a positive relationship with a student. Students feel that effective supervisors provide feedback in a supportive manner, have strong interpersonal and communication skills, promote growth, and are flexible and openminded. On the other hand, ineffective supervisors have poor interpersonal and communication skills, lack competence and clinical skills, are rigid and controlling, and have a negative attitude. There are a variety of ways to build and strengthen the trust between a fieldwork supervisor and a student. Those include open and honest communication, keeping commitments, protecting the interests of one another, and listening and speaking to one another respectfully. It is important to address difficult issues immediately rather than delaying as well as being open and honest. Hiding important issues within the supervisor-student relationship does not lead to building trust.^{7,9,11,12}

Similar to the impact of emotions, sociocultural factors also influence feedback and how it is received. Key components of sociocultural factors include context, environment, and interpersonal relationships. These factors impact not only the structure but the perception of feedback and how it is received. Careful attention to sociocultural factors is an important part of all feedback practices. This involves understanding the sociocultural considerations of the educator, the student, and the patient as well as the type of feedback, be it formal vs informal and/or verbal vs nonverbal.⁶ For example, some cultures do not emphasize feedback given in an informal setting and only make efforts to change based on formal feedback. There are also personal attributes of the learner, his/her learning style, and his/her skills, competencies, and behaviors. It is important for the fieldwork supervisor to understand the student's learning style to best promote success. If the student is an experiential learner then he/she may require more simulations and real experiences compared to a visual learner who may be able to watch the fieldwork supervisor and then perform the task themselves. Sometimes, students

are not even aware of how their own personal assumptions, beliefs, values, habits, and routines affect the situation and limit their opportunities for new learning. For example, some students may have an unconscious bias against those who are incarcerated or convicted of a crime. Moreover, it is likely that they are not aware that their perceptions are skewed by these factors.^{6,17}

In addition, there are some interaction features that strongly influence feedback including tone and volume of voice, body language, intellectual style, and conversation management. Nonverbal communication including body language, eye contact, and posture are as important as the words spoken. Some cultures organize information differently, expressing opinions in a more argumentative or a less assertive form. Conversation management includes taking turns, interruptions and disagreements. How does the student handle a disagreement? Does he/she interrupt others while they are speaking?⁶ These factors all strongly influence the success of an interaction and assist with considering sociocultural components within an interaction, specifically a feedback interaction. It is important to understand the student's values and beliefs to make sure that this does not negatively impact the student's performance and success.

Salient points from Section 5

- Feedback often elicits an emotional response and this emotional response typically plays a large role in the receiving and giving of feedback. [p.26]
- The feedback sandwich (two positive and one negative comment) is effective if the comments are meaningful and specific. [p.27]
- It is important to build and strengthen the trust between a fieldwork supervisor and a student, which includes open and honest communication, keeping commitments, protecting the interests of one another, and listening and speaking to one another respectfully. [p.31-32]

Section 6: When and How to Use Written Feedback



Learning objective:

1. To define written feedback
2. To determine when it is most effective to use written feedback
3. To highlight the different focuses of written feedback
4. To provide knowledge on and strategies for using written feedback

Feedback can be given both verbally and nonverbally but can also be given and received in written format. Written feedback is defined as information about student performance conveyed in prose. Written feedback has its benefits including that it can reread and that it can be given at a later date than the activity or task is performed. It also has its drawbacks including that it is not appropriate when immediate feedback is necessary. There are four levels of written feedback: task-focused, process-focused, self-regulated focused, and person-focused.

1. Task-focused: This type of feedback revolves around how well a task has been done. It identifies when statements are invalid, suggesting more or different information is needed for clarification. It encourages students to increase their knowledge. Unfortunately, it does not always generalize to other tasks. For example, after observing a student perform an

- adaptive equipment assessment in a home health setting, the fieldwork educator should identify what was done well. He/she should ask the student questions about things the educator saw that did not make sense or were incorrect and allow the student the opportunity to correct themselves.⁶
2. Process-focused: This type of feedback addresses the process used when completing tasks rather than focusing on the tasks themselves. It focuses on creating meaning and connections between concepts. It is much easier to generalize and promote deeper learning and understanding. For example, have the student explain how several different interventions are guided by a particular theory.⁶
 3. Self-regulated focused feedback: This type of feedback involves the student's ability to monitor, direct, and regulate actions towards learning goals. The elements that determine the effectiveness of this self-regulated feedback include the student's ability to create internal feedback, his/her ability to self-assess, his/her ability to invest effort in seeking and handling feedback information, his/her confidence in responding to feedback, his/her feelings towards success and failure, and finally his/her ability to ask for assistance and clarification. For example, have the student keep a journal writing down his/her thoughts on how he/she is performing and daily assessments on how he/she is working towards his/her goals. This can also include questions, concepts to research, ideas, etc. This was suggested earlier in Section 4.^{6,17}
 4. Person-focused: This type of feedback focuses on personal characteristics and attributes and not the task. This is usually ineffective and feels like an attack on the individual. Feedback should focus on the task rather than the individual. For example, telling the student that he/she performed a transfer incorrectly secondary to the student's height or weight.^{5,6,17}

When providing written feedback, try to avoid wording that reflects “final vocabulary” (p.115).⁶ Final vocabulary is bland verbiage that leaves the learner with nowhere to go. It provides no room for improvements or explanations and positions feedback in only one direction. Final vocabulary usually does not give any description about the actual work itself.⁶ For example, positive final vocabulary consists of phrases like “well done” while negative final vocabulary consists of phrases like “you missed the point.” This type of feedback lacks content and direction, can be easily misread and misinterpreted to mean that the student is either an expert and does not need to learn anymore or the student is hopeless and cannot possibly understand the concept. This type of vocabulary decreases the possibility of discussion and collaboration to improve quality of work and create a positive learning environment. This type of vocabulary needs to be rephrased from statements into questions to promote learning.^{5,6,17}

In summation, written feedback should be understandable, selective, specific, timely, contextualized, nonjudgmental, balanced, forward-looking, transferable, and individualized.⁶

Identify a piece of produced work from yourself or a student that has been given final vocabulary feedback. Practice changing this into statements or questions that leave the discussion open. For example, change “you did a great job” into “The content of your treatment note shows you have a solid understanding of the client’s values and you have set appropriate goals.”

Salient points from Section 6

- Written feedback is defined as information about student performance conveyed in prose. [p.35]
- There are four levels of written feedback: task-focused, process-focused, self-regulated focused, and person-focused. [p.35-36]
- Final vocabulary lacks content and direction, can be easily misread and misinterpreted to mean that the student is either an expert and does not need to learn anymore or the student is hopeless and cannot possibly understand the concept. [p.37]

Section 7: How to Give Feedback During Patient Interactions



Learning objective:

1. To introduce the use of feedback during clinical procedures (patient encounters).
2. To provide helpful tips and principles to think about when providing feedback to students during patient interactions.

As the job of an occupational therapist involves clients, being client-centered, and implementing interventions, students need to have the ability to interact with patients and perform the necessary job functions of an occupational therapist. Students need to anticipate that they will receive feedback on how they perform during patient interaction. For the purposes of this section we will identify patient interaction or encounter as any time the student would interact with the patient, including evaluations, assessments, family meetings, etc. This feedback will come from multiple sources, including the educator and the patient. Debriefing is defined as facilitated or guided reflection on an event or activity and subsequent analysis. This sounds like another form of feedback and reflective knowledge building. Debriefing gives individuals an opportunity to state what occurred and reflect upon it to make the situation better. This will likely lead to new learning, similar to reflective knowledge building, if done correctly. Debriefing promotes reflection so that knowledge can be built. This is the foundation for the experiential learning experience. To bridge the gap between experiencing an event and making

sense of it, one option is for the student to videotape his/her patient interaction and watch it (with appropriate consents). This allows the student to observe him/herself, assess his/her performance and react to performance outcomes. He/she may be able to determine areas of strength and areas of needed improvement without any feedback from the educator. Since these types of interactions occur in real-time, it can be helpful to prepare the student prior to the encounter with some stimulating statements and questions to improve their preparedness.^{6,10} Some principles to think about are listed below. Use the principles as a checklist before and after the patient interaction to make sure you highlight each principle.

- Prepare the learner for feedback by explaining the process that you will use to give feedback (e.g. verbal vs written, immediate vs delayed)
- Identify learner's experience with patient interactions
- Explore learner's feelings about the patient encounter
- Discuss likely challenges and strategies for managing the interaction
- Explore learner's goals for the patient encounter
- Explore requests from learner for observers to note

Post patient encounter, there are some more principles that Boud & Molloy⁶ highlight for students to consider:

- Remind the learner of the feedback process
- Invite learner's reaction (verbal/written) and include expression of feelings
- Affirm elements of learner's performance that met/exceeded expectations (be selective)
- Identify elements of performance that were borderline or did not meet expectations- especially unsafe practice (be selective)

- Review challenges from the pre-patient encounter discussion
- Involve student in dialogue about re-evaluating goals, maintaining performance, exploring understanding of learner's performance, and developing strategies to improve performance
- Provide opportunities to practice strategies to improve performance

(p. 145)

If you decide that verbal feedback is the best approach, you want to make sure that your questions are appropriate and effective. Cranton⁸ provides some suggestions for asking good questions:

- Be specific- relate questions to specific events and situations
- Move from the particular to the general
- Be conversational
- Avoid echoing students' responses to a question
- Use follow-up questions or probes to encourage more specific responses
- Avoid close-ended questions
- Ask questions that draw on students' experiences and interests related to the topic

These questions and the discussion that follows will help to debrief with the student about his/her patient interaction. The questions and the feedback provided should probe the student's recall of the session and promote reflection. Through analysis of the session and facilitation of critical thinking, the student will hopefully discover something that he/she did not know before. This will create the opportunity for reflective knowledge building.^{6,10}

Salient points from Section 7

- Debriefing gives individuals an opportunity to state what occurred and reflect upon it to make the situation better. This will likely lead to new learning, similar to reflective knowledge building, if done correctly. [p.39-40]
- Since these types of interactions occur in real-time, it can be helpful to prepare the student prior to the encounter with some stimulating statements and questions to improve their preparedness.^{6,10} [p.40-41]

Section 8: Additional Sample Weekly Feedback Forms



Learning objective:

1. To provide examples of weekly feedback forms for use during fieldwork to help facilitate feedback.

The following table includes a few examples of weekly feedback forms to be used during fieldwork to promote open communication and to make it easier for the educator to provide feedback. This is by no means a complete list but just a few examples to get you started. These forms can typically be used in a variety of ways but are most effective, in my experience, when both parties, student and supervisor, have an active role in their completion and a discussion follows after their completion.

Table 1: Sample weekly feedback forms

Features of weekly feedback form	Clear instructions	Closed questions	Open ended questions/ space for comments	Addresses current and/or future student goals	Student completes part of or the entire form	FW Educator completes part of or the entire form
Weekly feedback form (school and website where the form can be found)						
Ithaca College https://www.ithaca.edu/hshp/depts/ot/docs/FW_Ed_resources/feedback_form/	X	X	X	X		X
Belmont University http://www.belmont.edu/ot/pdf/FW_weekly_review.pdf			X	X	X	X
University of North Dakota http://med.und.edu/occupational_therapy_files/docs/fieldwork-level-2-weekly-review-form.pdf			X	X	X	X
Central Piedmont Community College http://www.cpcc.edu/health_sciences/ota/docs/fieldwork-docs/level-ii-weekly-feedback-form/view			X	X	X	X

Section 9: Case Studies



Learning objective:

1. **To provide case study examples to apply the concepts learned within this manual and to promote learning of the feedback concepts.**

Below are two case studies of two different types of students. Try to implement the different activities/suggestions from throughout the manual to provide effective and efficient feedback to these students.

Case Study 1

Keith is an occupational therapy student completing his level I fieldwork rotation in an outpatient day program for adults with mental health conditions. He is placed on this rotation with three other students. They are responsible for collecting occupational profiles on new clients to better assist the occupational therapist with performing the initial evaluation and subsequent interventions. Keith is assigned to complete an occupational profile for a 25-year-old female patient named Susan Jones. The occupational therapist notices that during the interview, Keith calls the patient 'Sue' several times when he was not given permission by the patient to do so. He asks very scripted questions, giving the patient little time to answer each question and does not engage with her during the interview, sitting

back in the chair with his arms and legs crossed. He does not take any notes during the interview. Later, when it is time to share with the group, Keith is unable to provide information of any substance to create an occupational profile. Of note, the academic fieldwork coordinator did let the occupational therapist know that Keith is intelligent but has difficulty working in groups and has poor time management skills.

Guided questions:

1. What type of feedback would you give Keith?
2. What would be the content of that feedback?
3. How can you build a trusting relationship with Keith to determine if he is having an issue that is impacting his performance?
4. How will you make your expectations of Keith clearer to him?
5. How will you ensure that reflective knowledge building comes from your feedback?
6. How will you elicit self-reflection from Keith?

Case Study 2

Alicia is an occupational therapy student completing her first level II fieldwork rotation in an acute care hospital. She is assigned to complete an assessment, under the supervision of her fieldwork supervisor, on an elderly gentleman named Rob who is recovering from recent spinal surgery. Alicia enters the patient's room confidently, introducing herself and establishing a nice rapport with Rob. The supervisor notices that Alicia is investing a significant amount of time talking to Rob and is not managing her time as effectively as she could but the supervisor stays quiet, allowing Alicia to continue her conversation. However, as the session continues, the supervisor notices that Alicia is about to perform a transfer unsafely and abruptly intervenes, making the correction for Alicia before allowing her to continue. Alicia appears upset and annoyed by the interruption which causes her to have

difficulty recovering to finish the session. Alicia requests a meeting with her supervisor to discuss the incident and feels that the feedback provided during the session was inappropriate and unprofessional.

Guided questions:

1. What feedback will you give Alicia?
2. How will you address what behaviors are professional and unprofessional?
3. How will you make your expectations of Alicia clearer to her?
4. How will you help Alicia understand the importance of time management in this setting?
5. How will you ensure that reflective knowledge building comes from your feedback?
6. How might a peer to peer assessment help?
7. What prompts (from Section 7) will you use before discussing this with Alicia?

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