Elements of High Quality Narrative Paragraphs

- Include examples of student performance
- Examples should include BOTH strengths and areas for improvement
- Character limits should be considered to have MSPE fit the 7 page guideline

Three Components of High Quality Narrative Evaluation for MSPEs

Comment on performance
- Strengths and weaknesses
- Core aspects of medical student performance

Specificity of comments
- Evidence is good
- Examples are best

Useful to the audience
- Useful to the student
- Useful to the educator or residency program director

Narratives Fulfill Three Goals

Assess performance
- Principle source in assessing clinical competency
- Narrative evaluations perform as well as rating scales in differentiating student performance

Feedback to trainees
- Provide feedback and insight to trainees in strengths and weaknesses
- Trainees prefer narrative comments to numerical scales

UME/GME Handoff
- Well written comments are more informative than numerical scales

Movement Towards Common Language

Utilize standard templates/checklists to help frame the narratives when they are being written
- Knowledge, Skills, and Attributes
- ACGME Competencies

Keep it Concise
- Paragraph needs to be relevant and concise
- Better to include 3-4 strong narrative comments than all 15 comments from a clerkship
- Eventually there may be a character limit when MSPEs move to an electronic submission format
**How To Handle Incorporating Negative Comments in the Narrative Paragraph**

- Include especially if there is a pattern of negative comments
- Can state the positive aspects first (definitely include if there are any listed in evaluations)
- Follow with specific examples outlining the concerns, how the concerns were addressed, and the response of the student
- Often the response of the student is more important than the event

**Steps for How to Write an Informative and Concise Summary Narrative to Comply with MSPE Guidelines**

- Review all faculty and resident evaluations to decide which ones to include
- Select relevant, well worded sections of longer narratives
  - Select specific examples that which address core competency domains
  - Consider statements from different domains to create a comprehensive narrative
**General Examples of Specificity of Narrative Comments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Maybe</th>
<th>Yes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualifiers</td>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Showed improvement.”</td>
<td>“Started the rotation where I would expect for level of training, but improved consistently.”</td>
<td>“Showed improvement consistently during the rotation and was able to perform complex surgical procedures independently without difficulty.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Examples of Specificity for Positive Narrative Comments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>Best</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualifiers</td>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Examples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Hard worker”</td>
<td>“Great team member, always helping out with things that needed to be done.”</td>
<td>“Student took the time to make a phone call to an outside hospital to obtain much needed records for the team.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Specificity of Competency Based Comments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>??????</th>
<th>Better</th>
<th>Best</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Qualifier</td>
<td>Evidence</td>
<td>Example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“competent.”</td>
<td>“Did a nice job taking histories and exams were reproducible.”</td>
<td>“She demonstrated excellent clinical judgment and quickly recognized a child’s worsening respiratory status while taking the history and notified the team immediately.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Content for this handout was adapted from and shared with permission of April Buchanan, MD, Associate Dean for Curriculum at USC School of Medicine Greenville at the 2021 GSA/OSR Virtual Spring Meeting