



LIVE SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS IN PRACTICUM: MORE THAN JUST WATCHING



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Supervision 2010 Common Threads Many Patterns #69

The many forms

- Live supervision:
- Direct observation Intentional observation,
Structured observation
- One way mirrors; phoning in,
- Role of fieldwork supervisor: participatory,
Non participatory.

Context of live supervision

- Family therapy, observation of children
- Psychoanalytic tradition, addiction;
- Standard setting bodies may require students to be directly observed during their practice placement;
- At UoA it is part of the fieldwork placement that students are required to be directly observed three times;
- Newly adopted in workplaces yet limited in social work literature.

Live Supervision is at best when...

- It is a collaborative process
- The practice teacher is in the same room as the student and client, sitting in the room in a non-participatory or minor participatory role (Ford & Jones 1987, p.86)
- When associated with experiential learning;
- It is more than watching and is planned and purposeful (Maidment, 2000)
- Three phase activity; preparation, observation, debriefing and feedback (Maidment, 2000, p.207)

Reflection

- What do you remember of your own experiences of live supervision...
- Reflect on how students might feel about the prospect of live supervision on their field placement...



The vulnerability of students:

'Having a good placement in (complex) government agencies, it really depends on what support they provide.. a student can easily fail in a big system. I think for those students you do need more support from uni - both feeling of wonder and being scared can happen in the placement experience ' (student)

- Maidment (2000, p.208) notes that 'structured observations are memorable events for students'. As such it is an activity that requires considerable skill and attention to planning and creation of a supportive environment.

What students have said about live supervision:

I felt nervous

I felt anxious about being judged

I'd say it was helpful

I think one of the things that I really was nervous about was getting my feedback at the end and were they going to say "ooh you shouldn't be here" or were they going to go "oh that's okay" so I was quite worried like did I do well, was I good enough?

Another student voice:

I mean it's a good process, you practically apply what you've learnt and there's always someone there for you to turn to and say "I don't actually know what I'm doing right now, where do I go to from now?", which is really good but ...

You are worried that you're going to do something that's so disastrous and it's not going to be able to be rectified. But that didn't happen so that's okay.

I was anxious about being watched but I think this is a great way of measuring practice.

Live Supervision : the Model

- Preparation
- Observation
- Feedback
- Next learning steps



Phase 1. Preparation and pre-observation tasks

- Context of trusting relationship between student and supervisor
- Careful negotiation between all parties
- Mutually agreed criteria
- Range of activities to take account of learning style of student and to prepare: e.g. structured rehearsal, role play
- Clear understanding of what aspects of practice to be observed

Student voice: Preparation

I observed interviews until I felt confident to try one myself. I kept reassuring myself that it did not need to be perfect

I did go through the case notes, made short questions, tried to tell myself to calm down

Discussed the client's situation, talked about the possible expectations and unexpected situation.. talked about cultural influences, my personal self vs. professional self and discussed possible appropriate theories or frameworks to use to develop a plan

Establishing the criteria for Observation (Cleak & Wilson, 2007, p.85).

Together decide on practice situation for the context of a live supervision experience.

Develop together a set of criteria, including the skills, knowledge, behavior, that would be expected to be demonstrated in practice.

Write these up.

Discussion re intervening in interview process by supervisor

- An aspect of a risk assessment relevant to the practice setting
- An aspect of an interview with a client in a hospital setting in preparation for discharge.
- An aspect of conducting an interview with a client while on care and protection duty

Phase 2: Observation by supervisor :Recreating the space for observation



- As a point of reflection for student; checking student ready
- Mobilize sensing and intuiting
- Notion of presence (still, mindful) eastern concepts useful here of non- attachment , equanimity, mindfulness;
- Calmness and compassion cultivated so that observations not contaminated by perpetual judgments and compassion contributes to emanating positive energy to counteract anxiety

(Humphrey, 2007. p.733-735)

Student experience : observation phase

Supervisor introduced me then I asked clients if I can start and I conducted the whole interview

I took the lead the interview was my own process the supervisor only interjected if I requested resource knowledge

I took the lead but let my supervisor interrupt when she thought it appropriate

My supervisor did the introduction and she took the lead she did interrupt me once when I started to talk about confidentiality

The observation process

Noticing: Reflecting

- What is the student doing well in this activity?
- Are there any obvious areas of vulnerability in the student's performance?
- How did the student demonstrate their use of professional self? Of building relationship?
- Is the student making use of theory and evidence?
- What more do you think the student needs to do to achieve competence or to make their performance more robust?

Phase 3: Feedback and debriefing

Student:

Debriefing immediately

- invite the student's critique of his or her own work first.

The following questions may be helpful in facilitating this process:

- What did you think went well here?
- What did you wish you could have done better?
- What would you be doing if you incorporated (the better thing) into this piece of practice?
- Is there anything else you believe you needed to do or know to feel more confident in this situation?

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3: Feedback and debriefing cont...

Supervisor

Feedback from fieldwork supervisor aims to be:

- specific, accurate, fair and congruent with the task undertaken and the agreed criteria.
- confirmatory, corrective, motivating and challenging (Cleak and Wilson, 2004) specific, accurate, fair and congruent with the task undertaken.

Identify what went well, and identify areas of possible change.

Check to see if the student was aware of aspects of the areas raised has a view about what different action might be required here If not, offer your practice wisdom and work out next steps.

Student voices; feedback

- *Made me see myself from other perspective gained more insight of my own practice and who I am*
- *It made me aware of things that I would not have thought of contributing to my personal development*
- *Provided what I did well and what I can improve on next interview*
- *To be aware of my bias when dealing with clients not to judge what they say*
- *Helped me gain confidence and breathe easier allowed me to identify areas to be worked on*
- *To let me know that I was on the right track, highlight areas that need attention*
- *Theories and practice go hand in hand*

Phase 4: Next steps to learning

- Make the next steps as behaviorally specific as possible.
- Plan for opportunities to practice the tasks that will comprise their final observations.
- Make a time for the next observation.

Student voices; What worked

I just kept preparing myself more and more

Positive constructive feedback delivered in a sensitive way

Just familiarity knowing what to expect having more practice

My supervisor's positive feedback and trust in my ability increased by self belief

I was more careful with reading case notes more confidence being open with my supervisor

Glad that it was over and that I felt it went well

Feeling more confident about my practice having learn from observation

I got more experience and felt knowledgeable

Given more practice without judgement

I am grateful that in such a critical situation she can take the time to observe what I am doing

Strengths of this model

- Provides students with specific guidelines on competencies that will be assessed during observation
- Transparent
- Promotes critical reflection
- Field educator gains a comprehensive view of student ability
- Prepares student for co-working

(Maidment , 2000, p.209.)

Cautions from literature

- Own lenses and bias.
- Different model of practice , approach to practice
- Student anxiety initially very high
- Connected to evaluation and success/ failure
- Field supervisor intervening in interview
- Safe environment.
- Power relationship

Further cautions

- Time consuming nature of conducting three-phased process.
- Several observation required to provide reliable evaluation of student ability
- Focus on growth and development of competency

Direct observation as assessment

- Beginning, middle and end
- Not summative:
- As a formative assessment then supervisor can give feedback around errors as natural part of the learning curve to be reflected on by student and not necessarily assessed.

Participation during direct observation

- Participation and intervention are deemed legitimate if they are designed to safe guard the observation for assessment purposes or to safeguard any of the parties from harm
- Non legitimate types of supervisor intervention might be in the role of Teacher /Rescuer/ Co-working practitioner.
(Humphrey p. 728).

The role of the observer

assessor must be flexible enough to function at different points along the continuum between participation and observation, selecting from the following roles:

- the quiet participant in energetic groups;
- the interested observer in quiet activities;
- the respectfully distant observer of conversations
- (Kemp, 2001, p.533).

A significant issue: observer intervention

Julie just sat quietly while I took the lead, she did not interrupt which was helpful and empowering for me

It was not helpful not going through the whole process from introducing myself to establishing a rapport and then getting to the crux of the problem later... my supervisor talked too much. It wasn't good and it was worse because I let her.

and

I took the lead- the interview went for about 1 hour and managed to complete the tasks which were required . I did look at my supervisor a few times for confirmation .She didn't interrupt, just gave me a nod to acknowledge I was doing well

I had it under control. There was the understanding that my observer would only interrupt if there was a major issue that I might miss or struggle with.

Issues

- Do we involve the client/consumer in the feedback? (Kemp, 2005)
- How do we include the students self assessment in the feedback?
- How do we develop observational skills that are not focused on having reflected back to us our own values, interventions, skills, our own potential bias?
- Should observations be done by a number of different practice teachers?
- Should observation not be summative assessment only formative assessment?
- What is the role of the observer: participant or non participant?(Kemp,2005,p.533)
- Observing both inner and outer worlds
- Could observation be grounded in detached observation at the time and guided by intersubjectivity after the event (Humphrey, 2007. p. 275)

Student voice :difficulties

My first supervisor was great. The second was very pedantic and small minded and just could not move on it made me feel very anxious and nervous- this impacted on my well being

I did know I didn't do well as I got stuck when the issue came out - it would have been nice to get comments negative or positive

Just verbal feedback afterwards, I would have liked it to be more formal and written by supervisor so that I could see what was done well or done better

In conclusion

The process of live supervision should aim to 'bring together the truths of all parties in as democratic a manner as possible, which will include making sense of any inconsistencies, and offering opportunities for follow-up observations where no consensus emerges'.

And... it should be a 'multi-stage project which includes prior explanations to all parties about the use of observation as an assessment tool and post-observation conversations with students, service-users and carers' . (Humphrey, 2007, p. 734).

References

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