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Enhancing the efficacy and utility of the Student Practice Evaluation Form (SPEF) for assessing student professional practice performance.

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INTRODUCTION

With the release of WFOT's Minimum Standards for Occupational Therapy Education in 2002 it was timely to review the efficacy and utility of the SPEF[®], developed in 1998 at The University of Queensland and used nationally. This revision was also to determine the support and training needed to promote the reliable use of the SPEF in accordance with high quality assessment practices. As a result, the Student Practice Evaluation Form – Revised Edition[®] (SPEF-R[®]) was developed and is used by all Universities in Australia to evaluate student performance on placements.

OBJECTIVES

The process undertaken to review the SPEF[®] and develop both the revised edition (SPEF-R[®]) and an on-line training package to support professionals evaluating students undertaking placements will be presented. The project aimed to support educators in the use of the SPEF-R[®] to plan placements, educate students and to provide high quality feedback. Both assessment and feedback are intricately linked to student learning, (Gibbs & Simpson, 2004/2005).

METHODS

National consultation with key stakeholders (students, practice educators and university academics) was undertaken using focus groups and telephone interviews. Key issues relating to assessment language, utility, applicability and support to its optimal administration, were analysed from the transcripts. Contemporary evaluation and feedback principles were sourced to inform the revision and website development.

RESULTS

A revised tool (the SPEF-R[®]) and an additional on-line training package (the SPEF-R[®] website) were developed. The website includes printable materials, audio frequently asked questions, video vignettes exemplifying evaluation and feedback principles and practices, and comments from professional practice educators. The training package is organised into modules containing critical information and actions needed throughout placements.

CONCLUSION

Practice educators now have available a free web based training package to support them when placement planning and educating students and using the SPEF-R[®].

CONTRIBUTION TO PRACTICE

The SPEF-R[®] and web based training package support the evaluation of student practice placements within the diversity of placements professionally and geographically.

Student Placement Evaluation Form (1998). The University of Queensland.

Gibbs, G. & Simpson, C. (2004/2005). Conditions under which Assessment Supports Student Learning. *Learning and Teaching in Higher Education*, Issue 1, pp. 3-31.

