

Module 3: Evaluation and Learning Assessment

Lesson 02: Assessing Procedures and Assessment Criteria

GIZ sub-project:

MANILA - Modern Approach to Nursing Instructional Learning Advancement

Development and implementation of a blended learning qualification for instructors for nursing practice in the Philippines

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1. Learning Objectives

1. Develop an understanding of different assessment procedures:

You should become familiar with different assessment procedures, such as standardised checklists or verbal feedback, and be able to assess their possible applications in nursing practice.

2. Application of objective assessment criteria:

The aim is to develop measurable and comprehensible assessment criteria and apply them in the assessment of trainees in order to ensure objectivity and transparency.

3. Customisation of assessment methods:

You should learn to adapt assessments to the different learning needs and cultural backgrounds of trainees to enable individualised support.

4. Promote fairness and transparency:

You should develop strategies to make appraisals fair and transparent, for example by clearly communicating criteria and feedback processes.

5. Give constructive feedback:

You should be able to formulate feedback in a way that is both constructive and culturally sensitive to encourage motivation and self-reflection in trainees.

2. Introduction to Various Assessment Procedures

Assessment procedures are structured methods that are used to systematically and comprehensibly evaluate the competences, performance and development status of trainees. They play a central role in nursing practice as they ensure the quality of training, promote individual development and provide tomorrow's nurses with sound feedback on their skills. There are a variety of assessment procedures that can be used depending on the objective and situation.

2.1. What is the Purpose of the Assessment Procedures?

The assessment procedures serve several purposes in nursing training. They enable a structured recording of the trainees' performance and ensure that the legally defined training objectives are achieved. They are important for both the trainees and the practical instructors in order to control and optimise the learning process.

Purposes of the assessment procedures:

1. Skills assessment:

Assessment procedures help to systematically review and evaluate the professional, methodological, social and personal competences of trainees.

2. Quality assurance of the training programme:

They ensure that the training standards are met and that the trainees fulfil the requirements of nursing practice.

3. Basis for decision-making:

Assessment procedures form the basis for important decisions, e.g. the awarding of grades, admission to examinations or further promotion.

4. Feedback and learning support:

They enable clear feedback to be given to trainees about their progress, strengths and areas for development. This promotes motivation and helps to concretise learning goals.

5. Documentation and traceability:

Assessment procedures create comprehensible documentation of the trainee's performance, which is also important for external examinations or legal requirements.

2.2. Objectives and Functions of Assessment Procedures in Nursing Practice

Objectives of the assessment procedures:

1. Achievement of the training objectives:

The procedures ensure that the trainees acquire the competences defined in the curriculum and in the legal requirements.

2. Promotion of individual development:

By identifying strengths and weaknesses, targeted support measures can be introduced to support the development of trainees.

3. Recognising learning needs:

Assessment procedures help to identify learning gaps and develop customised learning opportunities or practical instructions.

4. Create transparency:

Clear assessment procedures increase the transparency of training and strengthen trust between trainees and practical instructors.

5. Vocational preparation:

The procedures prepare learners for the demands of professional life by giving them practical feedback and teaching them to take responsibility for their performance.

Functions of the assessment procedures:

1. Diagnostic function:

Assessment procedures analyse the current status of trainees' skills. This allows targeted measures for further development to be introduced.

2. Learning control:

They help to structure and adapt the learning process. Practical instructors can use the results to determine whether the previous methods were effective or whether changes are necessary.

3. Motivational function:

Clear and fair assessments motivate trainees to improve their performance. They give learners the feeling that they are making progress and achieving their goals.

4. Selection function:

Assessment procedures serve as a basis for making decisions about the suitability of trainees for certain tasks or for passing the training programme.

5. Legitimation function:

They justify certain decisions, e.g. the assessment of examinations, the awarding of grades or admission to further training levels. This is particularly important in nursing practice, as training must be legally and qualitatively secure.

2.3. Various Assessment Procedures in Nursing Practice

There are different assessment methods that can be used in nursing training depending on the objective and phase of training. These methods can be divided into qualitative (descriptive) and quantitative (number-based) methods.

1. Observation-based methods:

- **Direct observation:**

Practical instructors observe the trainees in real care situations, e.g. when carrying out a care measure.

- **Observation protocols:**

Systematic protocols document specific actions and behaviours of learners.

2. Evaluation forms or checklists:

- Evaluation forms structure the assessment based on clear criteria, e.g. technical knowledge, hygiene standards or communication skills.
- Checklists enable a standardised assessment and minimise subjectivity.

3. Feedback and reflection meetings:

- Practical instructors give learners verbal feedback on their performance. The focus here is on praising strengths and promoting development opportunities.

4. Examinations and tests:

- **Theoretical examinations:**

Multiple-choice tests or open questions test learners' specialised knowledge.

- **Practical examinations:**

Learners carry out a care task under observation and are assessed on the basis of defined criteria.

5. Competence-orientated procedures:

- These procedures assess the entirety of the trainees' competences, e.g. in the form of case studies or simulations.

6. Peer feedback:

- Trainees assess each other and give feedback on specific skills. This promotes reflection and dialogue within the group.

2.4. Important for Nursing Practice: Adapting Procedures

In nursing practice, assessment procedures should be tailored to the individual needs and cultural background of trainees, especially for international learners. The procedures should:

- Clearly communicated and comprehensibly explained.
- Be transparent and comprehensible.
- Consider both professional and social competences.
- Respect cultural differences in communication and self-perception.

Conclusion

Assessment procedures are indispensable tools for ensuring the quality of nursing training and objectively evaluating the competences of trainees. They serve both to diagnose learning levels and to promote individual development. In nursing practice, these procedures should be practical, transparent and adapted to the specific requirements of the trainees in order to ensure effective training.

3. Objective Assessment Criteria

Objective assessment criteria are measurable, comprehensible and uniform standards that structure the assessment of trainees' performance in nursing practice. They serve to minimise subjectivity in the assessment and ensure a fair and transparent assessment of competencies and learning progress. Such criteria are based on training standards, legal requirements and the demands of nursing practice.

3.1. What is the Purpose of the Assessment Criteria?

The assessment criteria provide a clear framework against which the trainee's performance and behaviour can be systematically assessed. They are a central component of the assessment process and fulfil the following purposes:

1. Objectivisation of the evaluation:

They reduce subjective influences such as personal preferences or sympathies and ensure that the assessment is made on an objective basis.

2. Comparability of performance:

Assessment criteria create a standardised basis for comparing the performance of different trainees.

3. Comprehensibility:

Clearly defined criteria make the assessment transparent and understandable for trainees. This strengthens confidence in the assessment process.

4. Orientation for practice instructors:

They help practice instructors to focus on the essential competences and training objectives.

5. Quality assurance:

The use of standardised criteria ensures compliance with training standards and the quality of nursing training.

3.2. Objectives of the Assessment Criteria in Nursing Practice

The objectives of objective assessment criteria can be divided into three main areas: supporting learners, ensuring the quality of training and further developing nursing practice.

1. Support for learners:

- **Feedback:**

Assessment criteria provide clear feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of trainees.

- **Skills development:**

They specifically promote the further development of professional, social and methodological skills.

- **Self-reflection:**

Clear criteria help learners to assess their performance more realistically and work specifically on improvements.

2. Ensuring the quality of training:

- **Compliance with legal requirements:**

Assessment criteria are based on the training guidelines and ensure that the prescribed competences are achieved.

- **Standardisation:**

They ensure that the quality of training in different institutions remains comparable.

3. Further development of nursing practice:

- **Adaptation to practical requirements:**

Criteria reflect the current challenges and requirements in nursing care.

- Promote innovation:

The regular review and updating of criteria contributes to the further development of training content.

3.3. Functions of the Assessment Criteria

The functions of the assessment criteria are diverse and concern both the assessment and the organisation of the learning process. They fulfil the following tasks:

1. Evaluation function:

Assessment criteria provide an objective basis for evaluating trainees' performance. These include:

- Professional skills, such as the correct implementation of care measures.
- Social skills, such as empathy and communication skills.
- Personal qualities such as reliability and a sense of responsibility.

2. Promotional function:

They help to control the learning process and develop targeted support measures.

Example: If a trainee has difficulties with care planning, specific training or practical guidance can be offered.

3. Control function:

Assessment criteria focus on the central training objectives and help practical instructors to organise their guidance methodically and purposefully.

4. Control function:

They are used to check the learning success and determine whether the specified training objectives have been achieved.

5. Transparency function:

Clear criteria ensure that the assessment process is transparent and fair. This strengthens the trainees' confidence in the assessment.

3.4. Requirements for Objective Assessment Criteria

In order for assessment criteria to be used effectively and objectively, they must fulfil the following requirements:

1. Clarity:

Criteria must be clearly formulated and understandable for all parties involved. Example: "The trainee performs basic care in compliance with hygiene standards."

2. Measurability:

The criteria should describe measurable performance or behaviour, e.g. "performs bandage changes appropriately and independently."

3. Relevance:

The criteria must relate to key competences and training objectives and be relevant to practice.

4. Comparability:

They should make it possible to objectively compare the performance of different trainees.

5. Flexibility:

It must be possible to adapt assessment criteria to the individual needs and cultural background of trainees, e.g. for international nursing staff.

3.5. Examples of Objective Assessment Criteria in Nursing Practice

Expertise:

- "The trainee performs the vital sign check correctly and independently."
- "He explains the planned measure to the patient in an understandable way."

Methodological expertise:

- "The trainee plans the care taking into account the individual needs of the patient."
- "He applies the care techniques he has learnt with confidence."

Social competence:

- "The trainee communicates empathically with the patient and their relatives."
- "He is a team player and supports his colleagues at work."

Personal competence:

- "The trainee reflects independently on their actions and recognises potential for improvement."
- "He shows a high degree of responsibility in the execution of his tasks."

3.6. Implementation in Nursing Practice

In nursing practice, the objective assessment criteria should be regularly reviewed and adapted to ensure that they are up to date and relevant. Practical instructors should:

1. Attend training courses on assessment criteria:

To ensure that they apply the criteria correctly and minimise subjective influences.

2. Create transparency:

The criteria should be communicated to trainees from the outset so that they know what they are being measured against.

3. Ensure documentation:

The assessments should be documented to ensure traceability and comparability.

Conclusion

Objective assessment criteria are a central element of nursing training. They create a transparent and fair basis for the assessment of trainees, promote their further development and ensure the quality of training. Clear, measurable and relevant criteria structure the learning process, effectively promote student performance and sustainably strengthen nursing practice.

4. Adapting Assessment to Individual Learning Needs

Adapting assessment to individual learning needs is an essential part of nursing training, especially in heterogeneous groups. Trainees have different prerequisites, previous experience, learning styles, cultural backgrounds and competences. For practical instructors, this means adapting their assessment methods and feedback individually in order to support learners in the best possible way and to act in a culturally sensitive manner. This customisation not only supports the learning process, but also the personal and professional development of the trainees.

4.1 What is the Purpose of Customisation?

The customisation of the assessment makes it possible to take into account the individual learning level, special needs and cultural background of the trainees. It serves this purpose:

1. Increase motivation to learn:

By making learners feel understood and valued, they are encouraged to actively pursue their goals.

2. Overcome learning barriers:

Differences in previous experience or cultural communication styles can be overcome by providing feedback in a targeted and understandable way.

3. Promote self-confidence:

Customised feedback strengthens the trainees' confidence in their abilities.

4. To ensure that the training objectives are achieved:

Customisation means that all trainees - regardless of their starting conditions - can achieve the same training objectives.

4.2 Considering Individual Learning Needs

1. Different prior knowledge and educational levels:
 - Trainees may have different levels of prior knowledge, e.g. from previous training or international degree programmes.
 - Practical instructors should first diagnose the learning status and formulate individual learning objectives based on this.
2. Different learning styles:
 - Some learners prefer practical exercises (haptic learning), others prefer theoretical knowledge (cognitive learning).
 - Assessments and feedback should be designed to support the preferred learning style.
3. Cultural imprints:
 - Trainees often have different ideas about hierarchies, communication and feedback.
 - It is important to respect cultural differences and to organise feedback in such a way that it is motivating and understandable.
4. Individual learning pace:
 - Some learners need more time to understand a task and perform it confidently.
 - Assessment should be based on individual progress rather than solely on standardised time targets.

4.3 Giving Constructive and Culturally Appropriate Feedback

Feedback is a central component of assessment and must be constructive and culturally sensitive in order to promote individual learning. Especially in nursing practice, where cultural background and personal attitudes play a role, a sensitive approach is essential.

Characteristics of constructive feedback:

1. **Concrete and comprehensible:**
 - Practice instructors should give specific examples, e.g. "You applied the handgrip correctly when mobilising the patient."
 - Generalised statements such as "That was good" or "That was bad" should be avoided as they offer little learning value.
2. **Balance of praise and criticism:**
 - A balance of positive feedback ("What went well?") and suggestions for improvement ("What can be optimised?") ensures motivation and learning progress.
3. **Future-orientated:**
 - Instead of just emphasising mistakes, feedback should point out how things can be done better next time. Example: "Next time you change the bandage, try to inform the patient about each step in advance."
4. **Personal and appreciative:**
 - Feedback should always be formulated respectfully and respect the personality of the learner.

Culturally adapted feedback:

The cultural background influences how learners receive and react to feedback. Practice instructors should:

1. Respect hierarchies:

In many cultures, the relationship between teachers and learners is characterised by a high regard for authority. Criticism should therefore be formulated indirectly and respectfully.

2. Avoid loss of face:

Direct criticism can be perceived as inappropriate and demotivating. Instead, criticism can be packaged in suggestions, e.g:

Instead of: "That was done incorrectly", it is better to say: "I saw that you used a different technique. Shall we repeat the standard steps together?"

3. Emphasise progress, not just mistakes:

Trainees may be unsure whether they fulfil the requirements. Praise for small steps forward can strengthen their confidence and commitment.

4. Allow time for queries:

Language barriers or cultural uncertainties can lead to feedback not being fully understood. Practical instructors should provide the space to ask questions.

4.4 Promoting Individual Learning Through Customised Feedback

1. Promotion of reflection:

Practice instructors can encourage trainees to reflect on themselves by asking specific questions:

- "How did you perceive the situation?"
- "What would you do differently next time?"

2. Target agreements:

Following an assessment, clear objectives should be defined that address individual learning needs, e.g:

- "Next week we will practise how to fill out the care documentation correctly."

3. Create a positive learning atmosphere:

Praise and motivation are essential to create a supportive learning environment. Learners who feel respected and understood are more willing to develop further.

4. Regular feedback loops:

Continuous feedback helps to steer the learning process and makes it possible to respond to challenges at an early stage.

Conclusion

Adapting the assessment to individual learning needs is a decisive factor for the success of nursing training. Practical instructors must not only assess professional skills, but also take cultural and personal differences into account. By providing constructive, appreciative and culturally appropriate feedback, they can motivate learners, encourage self-reflection and support their individual development. Such customisation ensures that all learners - regardless of their background - have the opportunity to develop their skills to the full.

5. Fairness and Transparency in the Assessment

Fairness and transparency are key principles in the assessment process, particularly in nursing training. They ensure that trainees are assessed in a comprehensible, objective and fair manner. Practical instructors are responsible for creating an atmosphere of trust and equal opportunities by applying clear standards and comprehensible criteria. These principles are essential in order to promote trainee motivation and avoid potential conflicts.

5.1 What is the Purpose of Fairness and Transparency in Assessment?

1. Create trust:

Transparent assessment criteria and fair treatment strengthen trainees' trust in the assessment process and in the practical guidance.

2. Encourage motivation:

When trainees recognise that they are being assessed in a comprehensible way, they feel encouraged to develop further.

3. Ensure equal opportunities:

Fairness ensures that all learners are treated equally regardless of personal, cultural or linguistic differences.

4. Legal certainty:

A fair and transparent assessment is not only ethically important, but also protects the organisation from legal conflicts, e.g. in the event of challenges or complaints.

5. Promote reflection and development:

Through a fair and comprehensible assessment process, trainees learn how to deal constructively with feedback and realistically assess their own performance.

5.2 Elements of Fairness in the Assessment

1. Objectivity:

The assessment should be independent of personal preferences, sympathies or antipathies. Practical instructors must ensure that their own values and convictions do not unconsciously influence the assessment.

2. Same standards:

All trainees should be assessed on the basis of the same criteria, regardless of gender, age, cultural background or personal characteristics.

3. Appropriateness:

The assessment should correspond to the learner's level of education. Unrealistic requirements or excessive demands should be avoided.

4. Consideration of individual requirements:

Fairness also means taking individual strengths, weaknesses and special needs (e.g. language barriers) into account.

5. Regularity:

Assessments should be continuous and not sporadic so that learners have the opportunity to improve.

5.3 Elements of Transparency in the Assessment

1. Clear criteria:

The assessment criteria should be clearly communicated to trainees from the outset. This provides orientation and helps learners to understand the expectations.

2. Openness in the process:

The appraisal process should be transparent, e.g. through regular feedback meetings and documentation of performance.

3. Explanation of the results:

After an assessment, practice instructors should explain to the learner how the result was arrived at and justify it on the basis of the defined criteria.

4. Opportunity for participation:

Transparency also means giving learners the opportunity to contribute their perspective, e.g. through self-assessments or feedback on the assessment.

5. Documentation:

To ensure traceability, all assessments and the underlying criteria should be documented in writing.

5.4 Strategies for a Fair and Transparent Assessment

1. Clear communication:

Practical instructors should explain the expectations, assessment criteria and procedure of the assessment process from the outset.

Example: "Over the next few weeks, we will pay particular attention to how you prepare the care documentation. We will use a standardised assessment form for this."

2. Training and sensitisation:

Practical instructors should receive regular training to recognise unconscious bias and improve their assessment skills.

3. Standardised assessment procedures:

The use of standardised evaluation tools, such as checklists or evaluation forms, increases comparability and objectivity.

4. Feedback discussions:

Regular discussions with learners create clarity about their performance and provide an opportunity to clarify any ambiguities. Feedback should always be constructive and future-orientated.

5. Self-reflection of the practical instructors:

Practical instructors should regularly scrutinise their own attitude and assessment style. Questions such as "Did I give sufficient reasons for my assessment?" or "Was I objective in my judgement?" help to ensure fairness.

5.5 Challenges and Solutions

1. Minimise subjectivity:

Challenge: Unconscious prejudices or sympathies can lead to a distorted judgement.

Solution: Use objective criteria and standardised assessment forms.

2. Language and cultural barriers:

Challenge: Misunderstandings due to different cultural backgrounds or language problems.

Solution: Formulate feedback in simple language and maintain cultural sensitivity.

3. Dealing with criticism:

Challenge: Criticism is often perceived by learners as personal rejection.

Solution: Always formulate feedback in a respectful, constructive and future-orientated way.

4. Acceptance of the assessment:

Challenge: Trainees may perceive the assessment as unfair.

Solution: Offer transparency in the process and the opportunity for self-assessment.

5.6 Examples of Fair and Transparent Assessment in Nursing Practice

Assessment situation: Performing a vital sign check

1. Communication of the criteria:

"We assess whether you can measure, document and explain the vital signs correctly."

2. Objective observation:

Practical instructor evaluates on the basis of a checklist:

- "Has hand sanitisation been carried out?"
- "Were the measurement results recorded correctly?"

3. Explanation of the results:

"You measured the values correctly, but you could be a bit more clear when explaining them to the patient."

4. Constructive suggestions:

"Would we like to practise together how you can explain the values more simply?"

5.7 Objectives and Functions of Fairness and Transparency

1. Promotion of training:

Fairness and transparency create an environment in which trainees can optimally develop their skills.

2. Conflict avoidance:

Transparent assessment reduces misunderstandings and conflicts between learners and practical instructors.

3. Quality assurance:

Fair and transparent assessment processes contribute to compliance with training standards and ensure the quality of nursing training.

4. Preparation for professional practice:

Through transparent feedback, trainees learn how to deal constructively with feedback and realistically assess their performance - an important skill for their professional development.

Conclusion

Fairness and transparency in assessment are essential for successful nursing training. They create trust, promote motivation to learn and ensure the quality of the training process. Practical instructors should ensure that they use clear and comprehensible criteria, communicate the assessment process openly and provide regular feedback. This ensures that all learners - regardless of their personal and cultural backgrounds - have equal opportunities to achieve their goals.