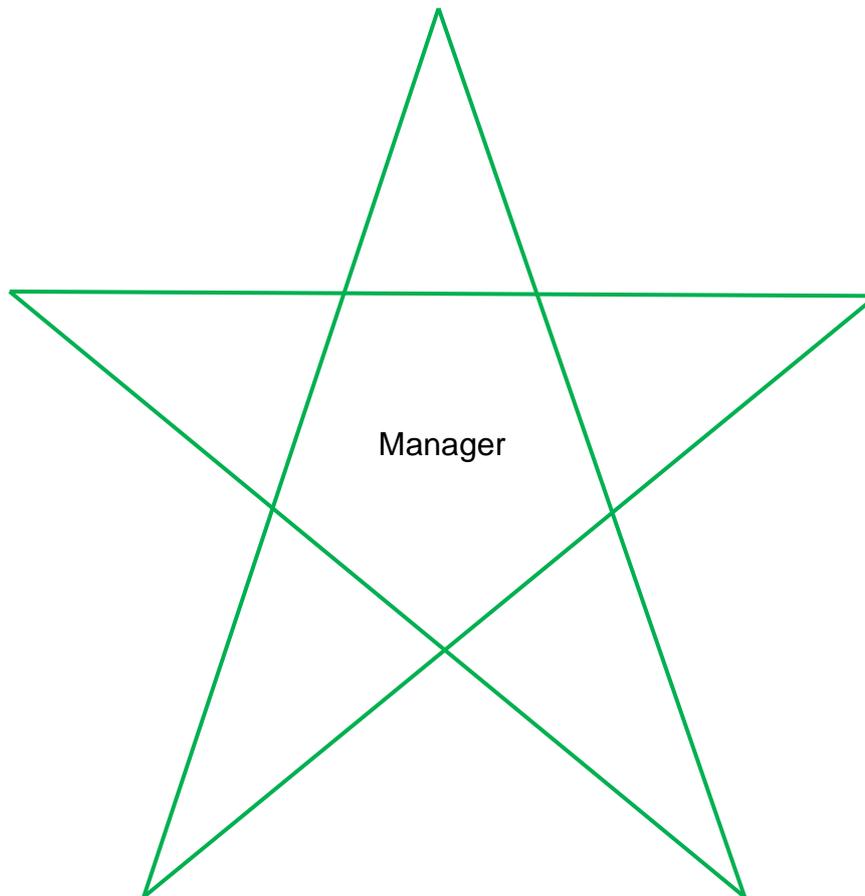


Roles of an Educator

Turney et al(1982cited in Best & Rose 2005, p48) describes the following roles an educator in the workplace:

- Manager
- Instructor
- Counsellor
- Observer
- Giver of feedback
- Evaluator/assessor



Roles and relationships of an educator
(Adapted from Turney et al(1982,cited in Best, 2005, p.48))

Define what these roles mean to you in your current workplace.

What are some of the tasks associated with these roles?

How might these tasks differ when you have a student present?

Manager role

The manager role is central to all the other roles as you can see by the above diagram. As a manager requires many skills but particularly skills of planning, organisation, networking and motivating. This role will be explored in further detail in the module Managing a Placement

Make a list of the tasks involved to plan and organise for a student to arrive in your workplace on placement.

Who else in your workplace needs to be consulted about having a student on placement?

Instructor role

The role of instructor is to share knowledge with the student. Be aware that there is no expectation that you *know* everything. As an instructor, you will continue to learn and develop. This is one of the benefits of being a workplace educator. An important aspect of the instructor role is the identification of learning opportunities in your workplace. It is also important to consider how these opportunities can be developed over the duration of the placement.

In providing these learning opportunities you, as an instructor may:

- demonstrate skills
- teach new skills
- model life-long learning
- apply learning styles
- give explanations
- ask and answer questions
- facilitate reasoning and reflective learning
- encourage problem solving and professional thinking
- incorporate observer/ assessor/ feedback roles

(Marriott & Galbraith 2005)

Ways to enhance student learning, including information about different learning styles, is covered in more detail in the module Facilitating Student Learning

Feedback role

Your role in giving feedback is essential to allow the student to develop and get the most from their placement.

The essentials of feedback are:

- to provide timely and effective feedback to improve performance;
- to provide ongoing feedback throughout placement;
- to provide constructive feedback

Evaluator/Assessor role

The assessor role can be the most challenging for you as an educator. It is closely linked to your roles of observer and provider of feedback but can be at odds with your role as counsellor. This role is described and discussed further in the module Evaluating Performance

Counsellor role

Although the definitions of counselling are very broad, the Macquarie dictionary defines counselling in part, as:

- advice; opinion or instruction given in directing the judgement or conduct of another
- interchange of opinions as to future procedure; consultation; deliberation
- wisdom; prudence;
- deliberate purpose; plan; design;
- to give counsel to; advise
- to urge the doing or adoption of; recommend
- to give counsel or advice.

(The Macquarie Dictionary, 1991)

While on placement students will encounter a myriad of experiences. Some of these may impact adversely on the student's performance. The student may or may not be aware of this impact.

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Sustaining the roles

- celebrating your successes as an educator to recognise the valuable contribution you are making to your profession and to individual student development.

(Adapted from McAllister, 2005).

Summary



This module has outlined the main roles that are associated with being a workplace educator. These are:

- Manager;
- Instructor;
- Counsellor;
- Observer;
- Giver of feedback; and
- Evaluator/assessor

Being an educator involves components from all six roles and at different times during the placement one role will become more important than another. For example, the manager role is likely to take priority during the planning and set up of a placement, while the evaluator role comes to the fore at the end of the placement.

The following list summarises aspects from all roles that contribute to being an effective workplace educator:

- Enjoying the student experience;
- Being well prepared when the student commences;
- Planning your orientation well;
- Being aware of the requirements of the placement;
- Understanding the student's learning needs;
- Having an ability to give appropriate feedback;
- Holding clear expectations;
- Promoting your profession in a positive manner;
- Putting regular time aside for students to ask questions and receive feedback;
- Allowing students to learn if it must be told;
- Communicating well;
- Being able to grade challenges and expectations for students of different levels;
- Offering flexible learning environments around individual student's needs;
- Having a diversity of styles and therapeutic approaches;
- Giving students the opportunity to observe and model from a variety of practitioners;
- Demonstrating your clinical reasoning;
- Being able to articulate your own knowledge limitations;
- Being comfortable and flexible in your role;
- Understanding the roles of an Educator and the boundaries that need to be in place given potentially conflicting roles (e.g. counsellor and assessor roles);
- Holding an intuitive grasp of each situation and displaying the skills and understanding required; and
- Having insight into your own and the students learning styles.

Being a workplace educator brings many benefits, however the demands of the role on the individual need to be acknowledged and managed to ensure the role can be sustained and enjoyed over time.

The various roles of the workplace educator are explored in more depth in other modules in this package.

Managing a Placement

Facilitating Student Learning

Optimising Feedback

Evaluating Performance

References

Best, D. (2005) Exploring the roles of the clinical educator. In Rose & D. Best (Eds.), *Transforming practice through clinical education, professional supervision and mentoring* (pp.45-49). Edinburgh: Elsevier Churchill Livingstone

The Macquarie Dictionary. (1991 (2nd ed.). Sydney, NSW: Macquarie University Press