The Effect of Objective Data in Narrative Observation Notes on Changing Supervisee Behavior

Rudyard C. Watson, M.S. CF-SLP email: watsonr@charleston.k12.il.us
Trina Becker, M.S. CCC-SLP email: tmbecker@eiu.edu
Jean Smitley, M.S. CCC-SLP email: jmsmitley@eiu.edu

Supervision Overview:

According to ASHA, a supervisor can be defined as “an individual who engages in clinical teaching through observation, conference, review of records, and other procedures, and which is related to the interaction between a clinician and a client and the evaluation or management of communication skills” (ASHA, 1978, p. 479).

The 1985 ASHA Position Statement stated 13 tasks of supervision. The tasks of supervision most relevant to this research project are:
• 96 Assisting the supervisee in observing and analyzing assessment and treatment sessions
• Interacting with the supervisee in planning, executing, and analyzing supervisory conferences
• Assisting the supervisee in evaluation of clinical performance

Most Related Research:
• Gillam, Strike-Roussos, Anderson (1990)
  Used joint data analysis system for changing 4 supervisees’ clinical behaviors.
  Findings supported the use of an objective measure of observation but did not compare objective feedback with the use of narrative feedback.
• Watson (2005) pilot study
  Compared the use of narrative supervisory feedback alone versus narrative supervisory feedback coupled with objective data with 2 subjects.
  Results suggested that narrative written feedback as well as the narrative feedback coupled with objective data were effective in changing clinical behavior.

Research Questions:
• 1. Do narrative observation notes (alone or coupled with objective data) alter supervisee’s targeted behavior over time?
• 2. Is there a significant difference between narrative observation notes versus narrative observation notes coupled with objective data in altering supervisee’s clinical behavior?
• 3. Is there a difference in the time required to change supervisee clinical behavior using objective data with narrative observation notes versus narrative observation notes alone?

Methods:
• All research took place within the Eastern Illinois University Communication Disorders and Sciences Department.
• 5 Supervisors and 16 Supervisees participated in the research study.
• Of the 16 supervisees, 11 were undergraduates and 5 were graduate students.
• 3 graduate students were in group 1 and 2 graduate students were in group 2
• Client disorder areas: executive function disorder
• receptive/expressive language delay
• language processing disorder.
• Dependent Variables: Supervisee use of informative specific feedback and time spent on goal directed behavior within the therapy session.
• Independent Variables: Narrative observation notes alone.
• Group 1: Narrative observation notes alone.
• Group 2: Narrative observation notes coupled with objective data.
• Procedures:
  • Ten-minute sections of each clinical session were video taped for analysis.
  • Supervisors provided observation notes with objective data or without objective data, on one of the independent variables.
  • Supervisors were not to discuss the target behaviors during the conferences.

Results:
• Data was collected over 11 treatment sessions and compiled into three mean scores: baseline means, early session means, and late session means.

Research Question 1:
A one-way ANOVA was used to determine whether a significant difference was present between the group baseline means and the late session means
(p value of 0.001)
Results: Change was present for both groups despite the observation note administered.

Research Question 2:
Late session means between groups were compared using one-way ANOVA. (p value of 0.191, not significant)

Research Question 2 (Cont’d): One –way ANOVA performed on gains for each group

Factors Which May Have Influenced Individual Results:
• Level of supervisee clinical experience: 11 undergraduates; 5 graduates
• Individual clinician skill level
• Individual interpretation of meaningfulness of observation note: numbers versus writing/suggestions
• Number of client goals
• Variation in initial baseline

Clinical Implications:
• Both observation notes were effective.
• Including objective data within the clinical supervision process may facilitate more effective and efficient change in supervisee target behaviors.
• Speech-language pathologists should “monitor and incorporate new and high quality research evidence having implications for clinical practice” (ASHA, 2005, p.1).
• Supervisors may want to add more objective data to their observation notes. It may facilitate clinical growth.

References