

Below are some guidelines that may be of help to you as you evaluate students in the clinical area.

### **Guidelines for Using Rating Scales for Clinical Evaluation**

1. Be alert to the possible influence of your own values, attitudes, beliefs, and biases in observing performance and drawing conclusions about it.
2. Use the clinical outcomes, competencies, or behaviors to focus your observations. Give students feedback on other observations made about their performance.
3. Collect sufficient data on students' performance before drawing conclusions about it.
4. Observe the student more than one time before rating performance. Rating scales, when used for clinical evaluation, should represent a *pattern* of the students' performance over time.
5. If possible, observe students' performance in different clinical situations, either in the patient care or simulated setting. When not possible, develop additional strategies for evaluation so that performance is evaluated with different methods and at different times.
6. Do not rely on first impressions; they may not be accurate.
7. Always discuss observations with students, obtain their perceptions of performance, and be willing to modify judgments and ratings when new data are presented.
8. Review the available clinical learning activities and opportunities in the simulation and learning laboratories. Do they provide sufficient data for completing the rating scale? If not, new learning activities may need to be developed, or the behaviors on the tool may need to be modified to be more realistic considering the clinical teaching circumstances.
9. Avoid using rating scales as the only source of data about a student's performance-use multiple evaluation methods for clinical practice.
10. Rate each outcomes, competency, or behavior individually based on the observations made of performance and conclusions drawn. If you have insufficient information about achievement of a particular competency, do not rate it-leave it blank.
11. Do not rate all students high, low, or in the middle; similarly, do not let your general impression of the student or personal biases influence the ratings.
12. If the rating form is ineffective for judging student performance, then revise and reevaluate it. Consider these questions: Does the form yield data that can be used to make valid decisions about students' competence? Does the form yield reliable, stable data? Is it easy to use? Is it appropriate considering the types of learning activities that students have in their clinical settings?

Gaberson, K. B., & Oermann, M. H. (2010). *Clinical teaching strategies in nursing*. New York: Springer.