# No continuity in continuous workplace learning?

# Perspectives on a learning, assessment and supervision model in undergraduate healthcare education

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**Background:** Continuous workplace learning is essential for ongoing competency development of healthcare professionals in the delivery of high-quality patient care. Due to the complexity, there is a clear need for empirical research and evidence-based models scaffolding the continuous learning, assessment and supervision processes. One model is Embo's six-steps model: 1. competency selection, 2. formulating learning goals, 3. reflections on daily performances, 4. reflection on competency development, 5. assessment of individual competencies and 6. assessment of professional competence[1].

**Aim(s):** This study aims to explore *students', mentors' and supervisors' perspectives from different healthcare professions* on this continuous workplace learning model.

**Methods:** Three semi-structured focus group interviews regarding experiences with workplace learning were conducted with groups involving graduating students, mentors and supervisors from nursing, midwifery, occupational therapy, speech therapy and audiology. Interview data were analyzed using inductive, thematic analysis.

**Results:** Five themes emerged from the data, that are in alignment with the six-steps model: competencies, learning goals, reflection, feedback and assessment. From the model, two steps seemed missing in the data (4 and 6). Furthermore, the theme 'competencies' was often interpreted as 'talents' by mentors and supervisors. In addition, steps focusing on reflection and feedback were experienced as artificial. Moreover, participants merged the two last steps into one, labeled "assessment". Additional barriers, such as a lack of time and uniformity, a non-holistic approach towards competences and an excessive focus on techniques were derived from the data.

**Discussion:**
All groups acknowledged the importance of continuous workplace learning but because of the substantial amount of barriers and the merged or missing steps, continuity in workplace learning could be at stake and needs to be optimized and supported.

**Implications and future perspectives:** Continuous workplace learning in healthcare education needs a grounding in empirical research to implement a holistic competence-based vision in practice and to support the different steps in the learning process. Therefore, different barriers, as derived from the focus group interviews and previous research need to be overcome[6,7]. Possibly, ePortfolios could be helpful to overcome these barriers[1,2,3,5]. Further research is conducted in the SBO-Scaffold project, providing a state-of-the-art ePortfolio to scaffold workplace learning (www.sbo-scaffold.com).

**References:**

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