

Highlight: SSISA

Summary

Supervision based on Self-Initiation and Self-Analysis (SSISA) is specifically designed to help supervisees work toward becoming their own supervisors. **SSISA** helps supervisees self-initiate, or choose their own actions, and it helps supervisees self-analyze, or figure out what their strengths are and the areas that they need to consider changing.

Value

Self-initiation and self-analysis creates a cycle in which supervisees:

- decide when and how to do something,
- analyze what they have done and decide on their next action, and
- become more skilled and better able to make decisions, and more confident.

Description

SSISA was developed over many years by Jacob P. Redekopp of the University of Manitoba. He decided that the ability to continually improve required that individuals be able to self-initiate and self-analyze.

The question, of course, was “how are self-initiation and self-analysis developed?” The answers that Professor Redekopp came up with are described below.

1. *Be non-judgmental.* The first critical element of **SSISA** is a non-judgmental approach. This means the

supervisor does not judge the supervisee as **either** good or bad.

2. *Build self-initiation right into the supervision process.* In other words, the supervisee asks to be supervised and the supervisee **leads** the supervision sessions.
3. *Build self-analysis right into the supervision process.* The **supervisee** does the initial analysis of performance when being supervised, and only when that is completed does the supervisor conduct an analysis.

Example

In **SSISA**, the supervisor’s role is to provide observations to the supervisee. The truly hard part of **SSISA** is providing observations rather than judgments. We are so used to telling supervisees “You did a great job” rather than actually **describing** what it is that they really did. But, if you want your supervisees to learn how to improve, it is essential that you describe what you have observed. In this way, supervisees can analyze their own performance. Consider the following scenario:

Supervisee: What did you think of that wine presentation I just finished?

Supervisor: Terrific! Good work!

Here, the supervisor believes that he or she has provided constructive feedback. But how useful is this feedback to the supervisee? All the supervisee knows is

that the supervisor is pleased. Now consider the next case:

Supervisee: What did you think of that wine presentation I just finished?

Supervisor: I watched your whole presentation. I noticed that both customers were smiling throughout your presentation and that you answered each question that they asked.

In this example, the supervisor has not passed judgment; he or she has simply observed and reported these observations back to the supervisee. Now, the supervisee is free to analyze the wine presentation with some information in hand.

Process

The steps of SSISA are quite simple:

Pre-Observation

1. The supervisee **asks** to be observed.
2. The supervisee informs the supervisor of the intent of the activity and specific areas for the supervisor to observe.

Observation

3. The supervisee carries out the activity with the supervisor making detailed written observations.

Post-Observation

4. The supervisee undergoes **self-analysis**, describing things he or she liked (and why) and things he

or she would reconsider (and why).

5. The supervisee **asks** to review the supervisor's observation notes, feeling free to discuss these notes as they are reviewed.
6. The supervisee **requests** general statements from the supervisor, whereby the supervisor reviews strengths and points for consideration.
7. If the supervisee requests, the supervisee and supervisor discuss plans for further development.

Implementation

To help supervisees become comfortable with self-initiation, **SSISA** is explained to them. The supervisor then sits down with each supervisee and helps him or her create a list of activities for which he or she would like supervision. The supervisee lists these activities from “most comfortable being observed” to “least comfortable being observed.” The supervisee is encouraged to request supervision on the activities in order from “most comfortable” to “least comfortable.”

If a supervisee does not request supervision, the supervisor will need to make a decision whether or not to step in and impose supervision on the person. Generally, supervisees do not request supervision initially because they are afraid of being judged. If supervisees can be reassured that the supervisor is there to provide useful observations, the supervisee may then be able to summon up the courage that he or she needs.