Using Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) in Speech and Language Therapy Pre-registration Clinical Education

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What are OSCEs?

- Assessment of clinical competence
- Concerned with performance
- Highly reliable
- Equity in the assessment of clinical skills
- Widely used in medicine and nursing
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Why did we introduce them?

- **Clinical skills** are a core part of SLT practice
- University based **assessment** needs to be **fair**
  - We were looking for ways to evaluate clinical skills in ways other than the traditional ‘viva’ style exam
- **Practice placements** offer a range of learning opportunities which should to be supplemented with **preparatory and concurrent learning opportunities**
Our current placement learning pathway

1st year: Beginning to demonstrate basic skills and knowledge

2nd year: Demonstrating basic skill in routine activities, with support and guidance for advanced situations

3rd year: Demonstrating competence with emerging independence

4th year: Demonstrating proficiency, with independence as appropriate
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Routine core clinical skills in SLT practice

| Clinical Communication - Interview context | • Professional Manner  
• Adapting communication to context |
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| Clinical Communication - Intervention context | • Organising therapy materials  
| | • Explaining steps involved in intervention |
## Routine core clinical skills in SLT practice

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|                                           | • Adapting communication to context |
| Clinical Communication - Intervention context | • Organising therapy materials  
|                                                | • Explaining steps involved in intervention |
| Clinical recording and reporting | • Transcription skills |
Routine core clinical skills in SLT practice

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|                                           | • Adapting communication to context |
| Clinical Communication - Intervention context | • Organising therapy materials  
|                                               | • Explaining steps involved in intervention |
| Clinical recording and reporting | • Transcription skills |
| Interpreting and evaluating clinical data | • Scoring standardised assessment |
Which OSCEs we introduced

1. Clinical communication - Interview Context
2. Clinical recording and reporting
3. Interpreting and evaluating clinical data
4. Clinical communication - Intervention context
Which OSCEs we introduced

For both of these

• option for adult or child context
Student preparation

• Class based activities throughout the academic year
Student preparation

• Class based activities throughout the academic year
Student preparation

• Class based activities throughout the academic year
Student preparation

• Personal study encouraged while on placement and independently
Student preparation

• Personal study encouraged while on placement and independently
Our OSCE learning motto:

PRACTICE
PRACTICE
PRACTICE
(& then PRACTICE some more..)
When?

- After placement completed
- Spring exam period
- Resit attempt in August exam period
What did each task require?

- **Clinical communication – Interview context**
  - Patient/Parent background information provided to all students in advance
  - Actor employed and trained for consistency of performance
  - Each student given 10 minutes for conversation task
  - Each student given 5 minutes to write notes
  - SLT assessors graded student ‘live’ as ‘competent’ or ‘not competent’

- **Clinical recording and reporting**

- **Interpreting and evaluating clinical data**

- **Clinical communication – Intervention context**
What did each task require?

Clinical communication – Interview context

Child or adult intervention plan provided to students in advance, with all required materials

Students given detailed instructions of the purpose of the intervention activity

Each student given 15 minutes to explain and conduct task with a SLT tutor in a ‘role play’ format

Each student given a tally to record ‘patient’ responses, with pre-planned errors for consistency

SLT assessors graded student ‘live’ as ‘competent’ or ‘not competent’

Clinical communication – Intervention context

Interpreting and evaluating clinical data

Clinical recording and reporting

Clinical communication – Interview context
What did each task require?

Clinical communication – Interview context

Clinical communication – Intervention context

Clinical recording and reporting

Interpreting and evaluating clinical data

Pre-recorded DEAP screening test, child with SSDs - added time between word productions

Presented to students in computer lab with headphones, viewed in ‘real time’

Students provided with IPA and extIPA

Record form provided with target words and space for transcriptions

Marked by Clinical Phonetician as ‘competent’ or ‘not competent’
What did each task require?

- **Clinical communication – Interview context**
  - Partly completed CELF4 screening booklet
    - Students provided with tables to complete scoring booklet
      - In exam room conditions, students to complete scoring in set time period
        - Students provide brief interpretations of the data
          - Marked by SLT tutors as ‘competent’ or ‘not competent’

- **Clinical recording and reporting**

- **Interpreting and evaluating clinical data**

- **Clinical communication – Intervention context**
Expectations

Clinical Communication – Interview Context
- Competent/Not Competent

Clinical Communication – Intervention Context
- Competent/Not Competent

Clinical Recording and Reporting
- Competent/Not Competent

Interpreting and Evaluating Clinical Data
- Competent/Not Competent

PASS/FAIL
Expectations

Clinical Communication – Interview Context
• Competent/Not Competent

Clinical Communication – Intervention Context
• Competent/Not Competent

Clinical Recording and Reporting
• Competent/Not Competent

Interpreting and Evaluating Clinical Data
• Competent/Not Competent
Resit attempt

• Individual and/or group tutorial reviewing OSCE performance and discussing ways to improve skill set
Resit attempt

- Individual and/or group tutorial reviewing OSCE performance and discussing ways to improve skill set
STUDENT FEEDBACK
The OSCES were relevant to the course, and a good way of assessing practical skills.
The OSCEs were well divided into four tasks each requiring different skills – we knew what was being assessed in each task (e.g. transcription skills) and this made it easier to prepare differently for each task.
We were all being assessed equally regardless of placement experiences (e.g. varying expectations of practice educators)
It was good to get the chance to choose between adult and child tasks – allowed us to assess our own strengths and mean we were comfortable in the situation.
The feedback we received was constructive and very helpful in knowing what to focus on in future placements.
Our 3 key learning outcomes

1. SLT students benefit from structured evaluation of clinical skills
2. Careful assessment design encourages transparent and fair evaluation
3. OSCEs can be used to supplement and focus student learning of key clinical skills
But...

- Time required to prepare, pilot and run each of the tasks
- The exam days were busy – students attended back to back throughout the day
Three key learning outcomes

Pros:

- Equitable
- Instructions and information on each OSCE were clear
- Opportunity to repeat / adapt in subsequent years
- Students access information at their own pace
- Replicates real-life scenarios
- Enjoyable (?)

Cons:

- Time consuming assessment
- Using technology – accessing video for transcription through VLE