

**THE USE OF ACTORS IN PRACTICE EDUCATION:
A NOVEL APPROACH TO PREPARING SPEECH AND
LANGUAGE THERAPY STUDENTS FOR CLINICAL PRACTICE**

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Background

- Practice education provides students with the skills necessary to enter the workforce, as it facilitates the integration of theory & practice (TPO, 2008)
- Increasing collaborative integration of university based and practice based learning:
 - ▣ How best to bridge the gap between theory and practice, often in challenging & emotionally charged situations?
 - ▣ How to facilitate the learning of clinical skills?
 - ▣ Skills of interaction and therapy are learned through direct engagement with clients (Brumfitt & Freeman, 2007) but how can we promote the development of interactive & interpersonal skills in a controlled environment e.g. Pre-placement education)?
 - demonstrations, role play, simulated clients

Background

- PEC in collaboration with the PE team should be involved in researching and developing new approaches in PE (TPO, 2008; 11) to enhance learning outcomes for students.

- Simulated clients
 - ▣ Simulation offers students the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge to practice, and to learn from their mistakes without harming patients (Rosen, McBride & Drake, 2009)
 - ▣ Majority of studies report gains in student knowledge, skills or attitudes
 - ▣ Research mainly focuses on medical & nursing students (May et al, 2009)
 - ▣ Few studies examined use of actors to simulate 'patients' in preparing SLTs for challenging situations in clinical practice (Syder, 1996).

Background

- Simulated client (SC) –
 - ▣ a person who has been trained to portray characteristics of a specific patient (May, Park & Lee, 2009) in such a way that the student must interact with the SC in the same manner as they would with a real client (Wilson et al, 2010)

Exploratory investigation



- Aim: To evaluate the experiences of clinical simulation workshops from the perspectives of both SSLTs & SAs.
- Located in a simulated ward providing a realistic clinical experience.
- Simulated 'Patient' sat at a hospital bed and engaged in scripted case scenarios with a small group of SSLTs, supervised by a tutor.
- SSLTs would interact with the simulated patients as they would with a 'real' patient on clinical placement.
- Active learning was further enhanced by them being permitted to ask for assistance from their peers or tutor, by using a 'pause' facility, if unsure how to proceed.
- At the end of the workshop the SAs, while remaining in role, gave feedback to the SSLTs from the 'patient' perspective.

Patient simulation workshops

- Linked to PBL problems (theory) that week
 - **Vocal nodules**
 - Student task – take a voice hx & complete perceptual voice assessment
 - **Huntington's Disease**
 - Student task - discuss prognosis with client & answer any questions that he may have in relation to his communication and/or swallowing
 - **Aphasia**
 - Student task - find out information from the client using a Total Communication Approach
 - **Schizophrenia**
 - Student task - take a case hx

Patient simulation workshops - Preparation

- School of Music & Theatre students (SAs)
 - ▣ Met with PE Co-ordinator
 - ▣ Written details of the patient roles
 - ▣ Links to a range of YouTube videoclips

- SLT students (SLTS)
 - ▣ Prevent over-preparation so just given brief details:
 - PBL problem reading (theory)
 - Vocal nodules: Jacinta Lynch patient simulation. Students will take a voice history and complete a perceptual voice assessment including MPT and S:Z ratio Take a case hx
 - Huntington's Disease: Discuss prognosis with client & answer any questions that he may have in relation to his communication and/or swallowing

Final year honours project

- Focus groups of 3rd year SSLT who participated in the simulated workshops
 - (n=10; 46% response)
- 1-1 semi-structured interviews with School of Music and Theatre SAs
 - (n=3; 50% response)
- Data transcribed and coded using thematic analysis

Summary of findings

This exploratory study evaluated the experiences of a clinical simulation programme, developed to prepare SSLTs for clinical practice, from the perspective of SSLTs and SAs.

This form of preparation has not previously been used in the Republic of Ireland.

Results indicate that both student groups were challenged but found the workshop simulations beneficial in terms of professional and personal development.

Thank you for listening!

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