Using Objective Structured Professional Assessments (OSPAs) as a way of assessing practice competence for working with young people aged 16-25

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University of Manchester

1.45 – 2.30pm, 6th November 2014
The West Midlands Continuing Professional Development Group
16-25 years – sharing practice
Phase 2 of the project:

To look specifically at to what extent Objective Structured Clinical Examinations (OSCEs) from medical sciences could be used as a model for assessing practice competence in this area.

To develop these as Objective Structured Professional Assessments (OSPAs)
What is an OSPA?

- **Objective**
- **Structured**
- **Professional**
- **Assessment**

Involve multiple stations, each with a different professional task
Fieldwork supervision
(Gonsalvez & Freestone, 2007)

- Supervisors’ assessments of trainees are an integral aspect of professional supervision
- Help gauge the effectiveness of the training programme as well as providing formative and summative functions for trainees
- Quality assurance mechanism by which services offered by training professionals can be judged
Operational bias
(Gonsalvez & Freestone, 2007)

- Scrutiny of 291 end of placement reports for trainee clinical psychologists over 12 years
- Summative feedback system - paucity of average and below average judgements
- Between domain ratings for the same supervisor produced very high correlations. Relatively weak between-supervisor agreement
- Reduced opportunity for trainees to develop competence
- Systematic halo and leniency biases or poor assessment instrument?
Assessment of competence

- **Factual assessments** (e.g. Exams; timed tests)
- **Context based assessments** (e.g. PBL)
- **Performance assessment in vitro** (e.g. OSPAs, simulation, role play)
- **Performance assessment in vivo** (in practice; in real life professional contexts)

OSPA stations

- Initial Consultation (history)
- Assessment and explanation (data interpretation)
- Action planning (psychological advice)
- Communication and ethics
OSPAs Information

• Trainees received the briefing/stimulus materials one working day beforehand
• The standardised professional task lasted exactly 10 minutes
• Actors received written and oral briefings
• The assessment marksheet was developed to be consistent across all stations and scenarios but the calibration varied between scenarios
Trainee

- Stations x4
- Scenarios (16-25 focus)

Assessment

1. Communication skills
2. Perspective taking
3. Information gathering and synthesis
4. Management
5. Professional integrity

Assessment framework
Trainee EP 1
Station 1
Initial Consultation
10 minutes

Trainee EP 4
Station 4
Communication and Ethics
10 minutes

Trainee EP 2
Station 2
Assessment and Explanation
10 minutes

Trainee EP 3
Station 3
Action Planning
10 minutes

The OSPA Carousel
Scenario 1: Initial consultation

Scenario details
• Consultation with a parent to discuss son’s needs in FE.
• Referral information indicates that parent may be agitated

Example information
• Aim is to collect background information and gain a clear overview of the problem/situation form the perspective of the client(s). This can include their views of the perspective of others.
• This station does not require you to explain anything to the client.
Scenario 2: Assessment and explanation

Scenario details

• Consultation with a University personal tutor to discuss assessment information for a 19 year old student with specific learning difficulties
• Trainees provided with an Assessment Report incorporating reading, spelling and handwriting scores

Example information

• The aim is to explain psychological and technical information in a way that is accessible to a lay person.
• Know the limitations of your own knowledge and experience. It’s okay to say you don’t know but explain what you will do to find out and feedback.
Station 3: Action Planning

Scenario details
• Consultation with a Headteacher of a special school for children with ASD
• Request for training/information on person-centred planning

Example information
• The aim is to agree clear actions and next steps with the client in relation to the issue presented.
• You should only discuss realistic and appropriate actions; do not assume unlimited resources.
• At the end summarise agreed actions and check understanding
• State how you will follow up and ensure the client has realistic expectations of the time frames.
Station 4: Communication and Ethics

Scenario details
• Self referral from a Year 13 pupil looked after by foster carers
• History of mental health difficulties
• Young person’s intentions of pursuing an remote HE course potentially conflict with the views of teachers and foster carers

Example information
• The issues presented in this station will relate to ethical decision making. Familiarity with the BPS Code of Ethics and Conduct (2009) and the HCPC Standards of conduct, performance and ethics (2012) will be central to the issues at hand.
• If relevant, seek information about the young person’s mental capacity
Please record your judgement for this trainee’s performance on **each** of the professional skills noted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Skill</th>
<th>Competent</th>
<th>Area to develop</th>
<th>SUPPORTING EVIDENCE</th>
<th>Improvement suggestions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Communication Skills</td>
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<td>• Clarity of purpose/structure.</td>
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<td>• Encourages and listens to client</td>
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<td>contribution and elicits important</td>
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<td>information.</td>
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<td>• Uses appropriate language and explains</td>
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<td>key terms if necessary.</td>
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<td>• Summarises.</td>
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<td>2. Perspective Taking</td>
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<td>• Demonstrates awareness of client’s</td>
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<td>perspective.</td>
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<td>• Seeks, detects, acknowledges and</td>
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<td>attempts to address concerns.</td>
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<td>• Shows appropriate empathy.</td>
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<td>3. Information gathering and synthesis</td>
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<td>• Obtains sufficient information to</td>
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<td>make decisions.</td>
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<td>• Rapid assimilation and synthesis of</td>
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<td>information.</td>
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<td>• Presents synthesis of new and existing</td>
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<td>information.</td>
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<td>4. Management</td>
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<td>• Demonstrates relevant knowledge.</td>
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<td>• Works in partnership to develop a</td>
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<td>shared plan.</td>
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<td>• Suggests next steps.</td>
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<td>• Manages client’s emotions and</td>
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<td>expectations.</td>
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<td>5. Professional Integrity</td>
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<td>• Explains rationale for any actions.</td>
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<td>• Specifies limits of knowledge,</td>
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<td>competence and role.</td>
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<td>• Where appropriate, challenges assumptions</td>
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<td>and perspectives.</td>
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<td>• Does not collude.</td>
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## Assessor's Calibration Record

### Station and scenario

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Skill</th>
<th>Marking Criteria</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Communication Skills</td>
<td>What would a competent candidate express in this area?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Perspective Taking</td>
<td>What key perspective taking skills must a competent candidate show?</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Information gathering and synthesis</td>
<td>What core information gathering and synthesis skills must a competent candidate show?</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Management</td>
<td>What key management skills must a competent candidate show?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Professional Integrity</td>
<td>What issues of professional integrity must a competent candidate show?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Why audio feedback?

The benefits of audio over written feedback include:

• Increased depth
• Differentiation
• Applicability
• Quality of information provided

(Merry & Orsmond, 2008)
Methods of data collection

• Calculation of inter-rater reliability between in situ and remote assessors
• Trainee online questionnaire
• Trainee focus groups, led by trainee representatives
• External evaluation by Hampshire Educational Psychology Service
External evaluation

Course tutor/OSPA assessor responses (n=12)

How well do you consider the OSPA exercise worked as an assessment approach?

Mean rating of **4.0** (SD = 1.2) where 1 is not at all and 5 is extremely well.

- What positive features did you observe?
  - Authenticity of the situation (n=12)
  - Practical arrangements (n=6)
  - Opportunity for assessment and feedback (n=3)
  - Well developed scenario (n=2)
  - Authentic trainee behaviour (n=2)
  - Opportunity to see communications skills (n=1)
  - Time to think about the question (n=2)
  - Scenario challenged trainee (n=1)
  - Opportunities for trainee to reflect (n=1)
  - Guidance notes for assessor were helpful (n=1)
Course tutors – perceived limitations

- Time – 10 minutes is not enough (n=5)
- Actor’s skill, knowledge and interpretation (n=5)
- Time – too much to think about as assessor in time given (n=4)
- Marking schemes don’t work (n=3)
- TEP nerves (n=3)
- Scenarios are artificial (n=2)
Future plans
Future plans: Sustaining developments

• Utilising existing resources
• Involving other Universities
• Recruiting assessors
Future plans: Scenario authorship

Three stages:
1. Authored by experts (so that they have currency and are authentic)
2. Informed peer review
3. Editorial committee appraisal

- OSPA scenarios need to be calibrated by assessors
- Aim: to establish a scenarios editorial committee longer term
Get involved

Interested in being an assessor or scenario authorship, please contact cathy.atkinson@manchester.ac.uk
For more information, see OSPA project web-site
https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ospa-project/

Or contact Jane Lang (OSPA project co-ordinator)
ospaproject@ucl.ac.uk