

Learners' and educators' views of clinical practice education in SLT:

A case for blended learning alternatives

Dr Sean Pert

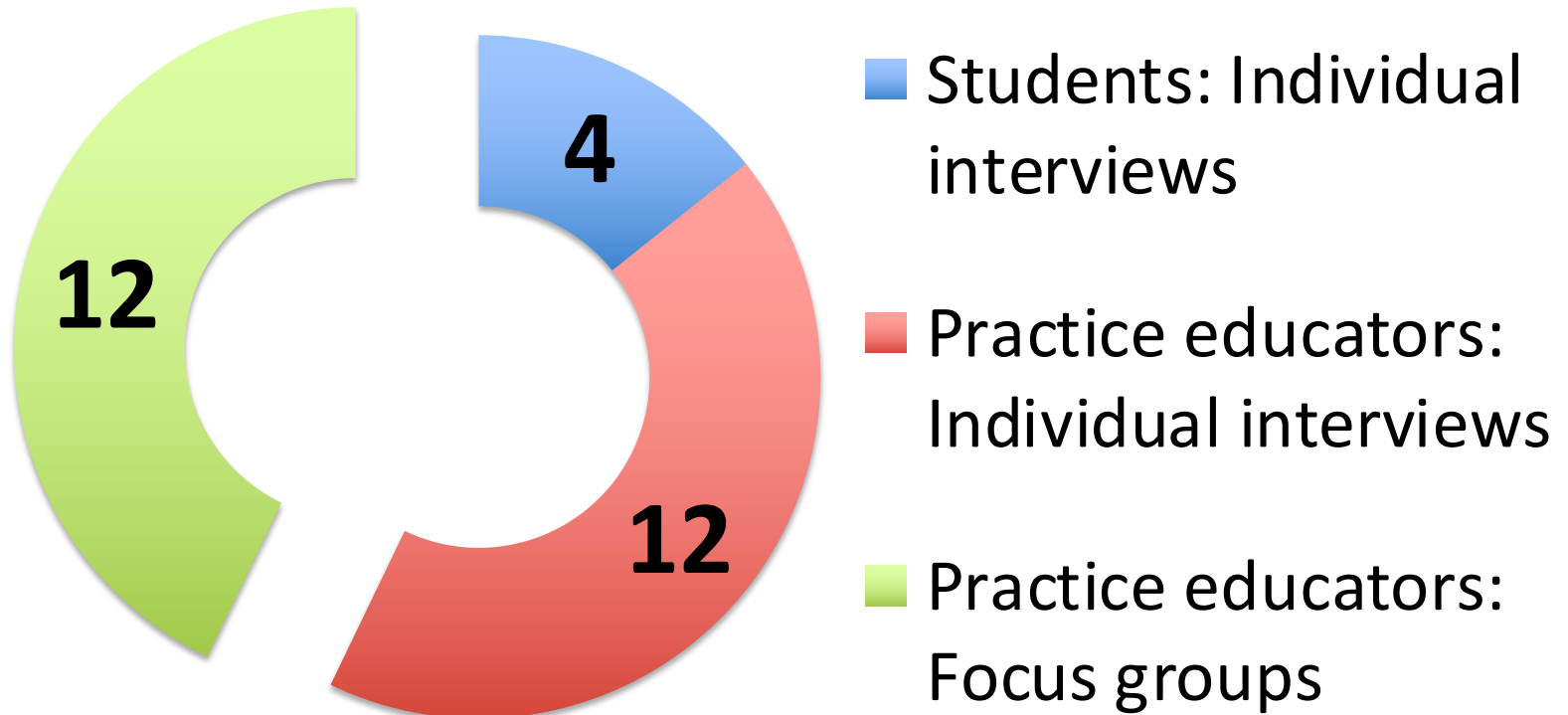
Senior Lecturer, University of Manchester

Dr Karen Davies

Research Associate, University of Manchester

Participants:

Individual interviews & Focus groups
(n=28)



Method

- **Interviews:**
 - 9 open-ended questions
 - **Individual:** 20-30 minutes
 - **Focus group:** 30-60 minutes



Method

- **Analysis:**
 - Thematic analysis
 - Qualitative analysis of relationship between themes and existing evidence



Results



PRACTICE EDUCATORS' VIEWS: FACILITATING STUDENTS

Themes: 1

Perception of educator role

Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explaining• Questioning• Directing• Linking theory to practice
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case discussion• Modelling practice• Prompting practical skills• Encouraging student to comment on SLT's practice• Structuring observation
Role model	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Showing how to conduct therapy in context• Showing how to focus on client and not themselves
Assessor / Evaluator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessing student level/needs• Judging level of confidence, stage of training, personality• Monitoring progress• Providing feedback

Themes: 2

Aims and expectations for student learning

Developing core skills in student	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interpersonal skills• Approach to learning• Organised
Developing clinical skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment• Goal-setting• Knowledge• Flexible practice
Encouraging professional identity and professionalism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Professional community of practice• Understanding role within wider context• Ready for workplace

Themes: 3

Good practice education

Responsive to learner	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Adjusting learning context and content• Agreeing preferences and aims• Enable student to identify own and client-centred goals• Staged process of providing support
Reciprocal benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two-way learning process• Shared knowledge:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student - theory/research• SLT: Experience• Reciprocal feedback after activities
Promoting clinical reasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encourage students to reason and explain rationale for intervention• Enquiry-based approach
Professional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include students in all activities• SLT enjoys promoting professional development• SLT enthusiastic• Well organised SLT is prepared for student participation

Themes: 4

Enhancing placement learning

Preparing student before placement	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Practical activities: Taking case histories with each other/video; Practising assessments with each other• Client group theory specific to client group• Tool specific to client group• Able to communicate widely and appropriately• Hands on experience at university clinic
Extending placement opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to inter-professional placements• Peer placements and learning
Preparing the educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access updates on education and research• Being informed if student has difficulties• Developing colleagues as new educators• Detail of undergraduate training in dysphagia
Strengthening the partnership with the HEI	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greater support from the university when learning to be a Practice Educator• Opportunities to build links around research and developments

**STUDENTS' VIEWS:
CONFIDENCE AND CHANGED THINKING**

Theme 1

Role of practice educator

Demonstrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Showing techniques
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prompting discussion• Encouraging student to question• 'Pushing' student's understanding• Creating a clear pathway for learning
Explainer/Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Articulating clinical reasoning and decision-making• Directly explaining actions and rationale• Help student understand the link between theory and practice
Assessor / Monitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluating student's readiness, confidence and approach to learning• Providing regular feedback

Theme 2

Working with a practice educator

Reciprocal relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Welcome and friendly• Open and available• Supportive• Clear expectations
Positive attitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students as benefit or burden• One practice educator responsible for feedback
Confident educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confident with client group• Confident teaching<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Understand the student's limits• Direct to evidence and resources• Agree learning objectives• Setting clear expectations

Theme 3

Practice learning

Gaining confidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Interacting with clients, family and the team• Understanding the SLT's role and practice• Becoming independent• Practical skills
Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Theory into practice• Specific features of the client group• Team working
Perception of self	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self as contributor• Realising how much there is to learn

Theme 4

Good practice education

Well prepared	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student researched client group and practice educator has relevant experience• Student understands concept of outcomes• Opportunity to see wide range of speech, language and communication needs and suitable approaches
Active participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Involving the student actively• Assigning a variety of responsibilities• Opportunity for questioning/open dialogue• Team working• Challenging

Summary

- Discrepancy between students' and practice educators' priorities for practice learning
- Students focused on:
 - building confidence
 - client-professional relationships
 - Technical skills, e.g. assessments

Summary

- Practice educators focused on:
 - Developing clinical decision making
 - Discussion, evidence based practice and reflection
- This gap can be addressed through clear expectations
- Use of blended learning combining classroom, online and practice workshops
- Use of theory to explain reflection