

An investigation of perceptions of practice based learning in Speech and Language Therapy

Emma Ormerod

University of Manchester

5th September 2017

Learning to be a SLT professional

Improving speech and language for people with a wide range of communication difficulties

Assessment and detailed analysis of speech and language

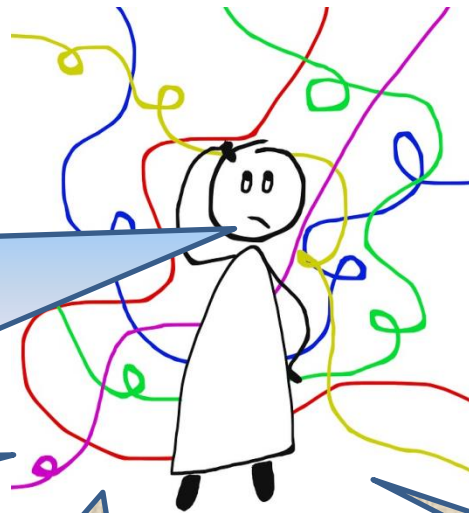
Any kind of communication problem

Feeding and swallowing

All ages

Any condition

Any context



The challenges of learning practical skills

- 'Fast track' from student to autonomous professional in 3 years
- Continuity of experience in practical learning- range of clients groups and quality of 'teaching'
- Availability of placements

“Educating for capability”

Traditional education and training largely focuses on enhancing competence (knowledge, skills and attitudes)

In today’s complex world we must educate not merely for competence but for capability (the ability to adapt to change, generate new knowledge and continuously improve performance)

Learners and educators in SLT placements

- Understanding of responsibilities in developing professional skills
 - Focus on models of training such as peer/1:1/role emerging placements/ block/ indirect supervision [1, 2]
 - Factors influencing the model adopted included availability of placements and standards rather than effectiveness [2]
 - Little evidence about what learners and educators do to promote learning in placement and effectiveness of models [2]
 - Clinical educators receive minimal training for the role [3]
 - Students benefit from well planned preparation for learning on placement
 - to facilitate their learning together as peers [1]
 - to develop skills in reflection and clinical reasoning [4]
- [1] Briffa and Porter 2013;
[2] Sheepway, Lincoln & Togher 2011;
[3] McAllister, 2005;
[4] Hill, Davidson, Theodoros 2012.

Study questions

1. What do students and educators believe contributes to successful learning in placements?
2. How do students and educators perceive their roles in practice education?

Study design: qualitative study

- Interviews with students (12)
- Interviews with clinical educators (6)
- Interviews with university tutors (2)

Questions about expectations, beliefs and experience of practice education

Findings: Clinical educators' expectations of students

Personal skills	Knowledge
Organised	Nature of placement
Able to build therapeutic relationship with clients	Understand client group/context
Questioning /enquiring	Apply or find out theory relevant to client group
Able to take initiative	

Findings: What educators say they do

1. Adjust expectations according to context and student knowledge/experience/preferences
2. Develop reflection in students
3. Promote professionalism

Findings: What educators say informs their approach to teaching

- own experience as a student

I remember what it's like to be a student

- learning collaboratively with students

Actually just having a student in the room makes me question why I'm doing this

- experience of best students

- drawing on SLT skills

I use the skills I use when I'm working with carers

I think students are a great resource

Findings: Student expectations

- Understand the SLT role with wide variety of clients
- Agreed expectations of what student should learn and how this will be managed from the beginning
- Opportunity to observe educator modelling practice, then ‘have a go’-find out what to *do*
- Regular and constructive feedback focusing on link between theory and practice

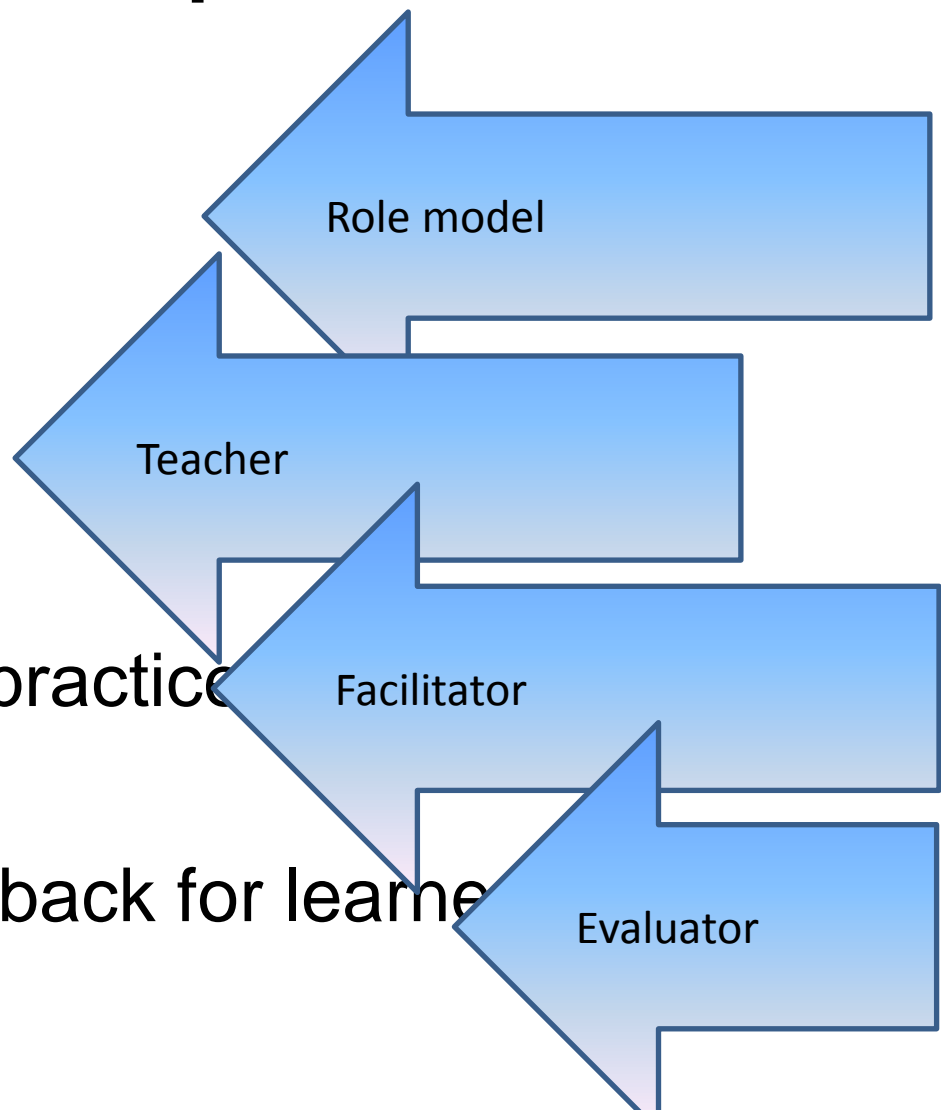
Findings: Students' perception of educator role

1. Demonstrator

2. Explainer

3. Facilitator of learners' practice

4. Providing specific feedback for learners



Role model

Teacher

Facilitator

Evaluator



How can we improve learners' application of knowledge to practice?

- “Practice ready” - develop student readiness before placement
 - Practical skills
 - Therapeutic relationships with clients
 - Understand how to maximise learning with educator
 - Able to reflect
- “Therapist *and* educator”-develop therapists as educators

Thinking aloud- a question of surface and deep level learning in SLT education

- How can we encourage reciprocal learning between student and educator for all students?
- How can technology contribute to learning how to reason in practical contexts?
- How can learning theory improve the way practical learning is provided?

Ideas for the Future

- Virtual clinics/ clinic workshops
- E-technologies
- On-site facilities
- Learning theories
- Partnership placements

Thanks

To the students, clinical educators and university tutors for their honest conversations about their experiences and beliefs during this study