



Enhancing speech–language pathology students' inter–professional communication in the workplace by engaging in Interactive Oral Experience

Ms. CHU W.S. Ada, Lecturer

Professor MA P.M. Estella, Associate Professor

Bachelor of Science in Speech–Language Pathology Program

Human Communication, Learning and Development, Faculty of Education, The University of Hong Kong

Introduction

Effective inter–professional communication is essential in preparing speech–language pathology (SLP) students for work readiness, encompassing critical elements such as confidence in engaging with diverse professionals, critical thinking skills, communication proficiency, and an understanding of interprofessional roles and boundaries.



This study explores the implementation of **interactive oral experience (IOE)** as a simulation–based learning approach, utilizing unscripted interactions to replicate authentic communication scenarios within three distinct work settings. There are three case scenarios for each setting that involve different personnel with whom the SLP students engage in case–based simulated interactions:

1. **Special child care centre** (personnel involves parent, special child care worker, OT, etc.)
2. **Residential care home for the elderly** (personnel involves healthcare worker, residential home supervisor, nurse, PT, etc.)
3. **Hospital** (personnel involves caregivers, hospital chef, social worker, doctor, etc)

IOE LEARNING GOALS:

1. Communication skills
2. Clinical reasoning
3. Inter–professional collaboration
4. Professionalism
5. Lifelong learning

IOE LEARNING PACKAGE

- **Simulation:** clinical educators acted as caregivers/ health care professionals of the work setting
- **Interaction:** unscripted case–based discussions with SLP students
- **Evaluation:** another clinical educator evaluated students' performance against the five learning goals
- **Feedback:** real-time feedback provided to students

RESULTS

1. **Pre-IOE and Post-IOE students' survey** on three main areas regarding inter–professional communication:
 - Perceived Confidence
 - Perceived Clinical Competence
 - General Perception on work readiness
2. **Perception of the IOE experience** on a 5–point Scale

Analysis

- Students' perceived confidence and clinical competence in inter–professional communication significantly increased after the IOE (Table 1)
- Over 85% of participating students reported that the IOE improved their perceived inter–professional communication abilities and work readiness (Table 2)

Table 1. Students' perception of readiness in interprofessional communication in work setting before and after the Interactive Oral Experience

	Pre-IOE			Post-IOE			
	Median	Mean	(SD)	Median	Mean	(SD)	p-level
Confidence							
I feel prepared to engage in professional interactions with other healthcare disciplines in the workplace.	3	3.06	0.9	4	3.78	0.74	<.001
I have confident in my ability to communicate effectively with patients and caregivers.	4	3.44	0.81	4	3.91	0.58	0.003
I experience anxiety when thinking about professional interaction.	4	3.56	0.91	3	3.25	1.09	0.084
I found it challenging to discuss complex cases with peers and instructors.	4	3.45	0.89	2.5	2.81	1.1	0.004
I feel that it is difficult to articulate my thoughts in a precise and concise way in a professional setting	4	3.54	0.85	3	3.09	0.91	0.016
Competence							
I can critically think for professional interactions in speech-language pathology.	4	3.35	0.8	4	4.06	0.56	<.001
I exhibit proper communication skills for effective interprofessional interaction.	4	3.49	0.71	4	4.09	0.52	<.001
I understand the roles of other healthcare professionals in patient care.	4	3.6	0.79	4	4.09	0.68	0.002
I believe that my current training has prepare me for real-world professional interactions	3	3.22	0.91	4	3.84	0.79	0.001
General Perception about Work-readiness							
I am aware of the importance of interdisciplinary collaboration in healthcare	4	4.19	0.61	4	4.38	0.7	0.091
I think work-readiness training before graduation is important.	5	4.41	0.68	5	4.66	0.54	0.049
I believe that lifelong learning in the workplace is important.	5	4.43	0.68	5	4.72	0.51	0.026

Note: p-levels significant at 0.05 level are marked in boldface.
Responses were ranked on scale of 1–5, where 1= strongly disagree whereas 5=strongly agree

Table 2. Students' ratings of the Interactive Oral Experience (N=32)

Items	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	somewhat agree	Strongly agree
The IOE enhanced my workplace readiness before graduation.	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.0%)	1 (3%)	20 (63%)	10 (31%)
The IOE instilled the need for lifelong learning in the workplace.	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.0%)	3 (9.0%)	14 (44%)	14 (44%)
The IOE provided valuable experience to simulate interactions in workplace scenarios.	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.0%)	1 (3.0%)	15 (47%)	15 (47%)
The IOE enhanced my confidence to engage in interprofessional communication in the workplace.	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.0%)	4 (13%)	15 (47%)	12 (38%)
The IOE broadened my perspective in case management in the workplace.	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.0%)	17 (53%)	14 (44%)
The IOE inspired me to reflect on personalizing communication style with different personnel that I will encounter in the workplace.	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (6.0%)	15 (47%)	15 (47%)
The IOE promoted bridging of academic and clinical learning to work ready skills.	0 (0.0%)	1 (3.0%)	2 (6.0%)	18 (56%)	11 (34%)

Note: Figures in bold typeface = the most chosen category by students.

Conclusion

This positive feedback underscores the value of simulation–based learning in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application in real–world settings.

Looking forward, conducting qualitative survey with both students and clinical educators will provide deeper insights into the impact of the interactive oral experience on students' learning and professional development.

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If you want to know more about our project, please email Ada Chu at ac616@hku.hk