

Summary of outcomes from UoP/ UIC workshop 1

Introduction

- The Department of Disability Studies is one of the youngest departments at the Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya.
- The department delivers three, four-year honours degree programs in Audiology, Speech and Language Therapy, and Occupational Therapy.
- The Faculty of Medicine of the University of Kelaniya is the country's only higher education institution that offers the above professional qualifications.
- Graduates are registered with the SLMC and work in health, educational and community settings.
- The department has over 500 students and 12 academic staff members. Most of these staff are probationary lecturers expected to complete their postgraduate studies.

The March-April workshop at the University of Peradeniya (UoP) led to several meaningful and sustained developments in teaching, learning, and assessment practices of the Department of Disability Studies, Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya. Day 1's session on formative assessment by Prof. Tekian and Prof. Park inspired the development and implementation of a feasible feedback model and staff training for the same. For instance, in taught modules involving case discussions, three randomly selected student answers were marked by staff using an answer grid. The grid was then refined based on student responses, and patterns in those responses were noted to inform future examination question design. The finalised answer guide was subsequently shared with students to support peer and self-evaluation.

We also introduced ward-based case discussions as part of the clinical practicum and added simulations as sessions within the clinical rotations. These sessions, led by internal academics, provided students with an opportunity for feedback before clinical exams. Their importance was reflected through a greater weighting of the clinical portfolio mark. Student feedback appreciated this as valuable formative feedback that helped them understand expectations and improve their performance.



Image: Case discussions and simulations

Department of Disability Studies
Faculty of Medicine, University of Kelaniya

BSc (Hons) Speech and Hearing Sciences / BSc (Hons) Occupational Therapy

Portfolio Entry - Year 2 (Emerging phase)

Objectives:
The objective of this mentor meeting is to help you reflect on your progress during the third year of your degree, develop insights into your existing professional identity, and plan for your transition into final year and beyond.

Instructions for Portfolio Entry
This portfolio entry should be completed after meeting with your mentor and uploaded onto the Mahara e-portfolio platform. Please include additional space as needed.

The portfolio entry should include the following:

Section 1: Reflecting on clinical and academic integration (Max 400 words)

- Reflect on how your clinical placements and academic learning have come together
- Describe a situation where you applied theory effectively in a clinical setting
- How have your views on clinical care or professional ethics evolved?
- What challenges have you encountered in integrating theory with practice?

Mentor Key:

Category	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4 (Final Year)
Clinical Experience	Learning to apply theory to practice in a clinical setting	Developing professional identity and confidence for transitions to workplace/organizations	Independent clinical decision-making, ethics and evidence-based practice
Academic Integration	Understanding the relationship between theory and practice	Applying theory to practice in a clinical setting	Independent clinical decision-making, ethics and evidence-based practice

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Section 2: Monitoring progress and professional development

- What were the key topics discussed during your mentoring session?
- What professional issues have you encountered during your mentorship and how have you navigated them?
- How do you think your mentor's feedback has influenced your professional development or career planning?
- Were any gaps or strengths in your preparation identified during the discussion?

Mentor Key:

Category	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4 (Final Year)
Professional Development	Learning to apply theory to practice in a clinical setting	Developing professional identity and confidence for transitions to workplace/organizations	Independent clinical decision-making, ethics and evidence-based practice
Academic Integration	Understanding the relationship between theory and practice	Applying theory to practice in a clinical setting	Independent clinical decision-making, ethics and evidence-based practice

Image: Revised mentoring program and documentation

Day 3's session on standard setting for competence by Prof. Park prompted significant revisions to summative assessments, including improvements to OSCEs (with examination areas now displayed outside stations), shifting rubrics from Likert scales to defined criterion-based formats, and reviewing the curriculum to enhance community-based assessment opportunities.



Image: Assessment areas are displayed on the door, visible to students as they wait.

1. Introduction & Communication Skills	
1.1 Puts client at ease by developing a rapport, ensuring a safe therapeutic space.	0 1 2 3 4
1.2 Uses an appropriate communication style and vocabulary with the client/caregiver, with respect to the client's age and medical diagnosis/profile.	0 1 2 3 4
1.3 Asks relevant questions to ascertain baseline skill level from client or caregiver.	0 1 2 3 4
1.4 Uses a range of techniques of interactive, dynamic listening and attending, sensitive direct questioning/probing, reflective questioning and/or responsive questioning with the	0 1 2 3 4

Station Objective: Case history taking and counselling					
Area	Below Expectations (0)	Developing (1)	Competent (2)	Excellent (3)	Weight (100)
Case History Gathering	<input type="checkbox"/> Does not ask questions. Very limited or irrelevant history taking	<input type="checkbox"/> Covers only basic information, important questions/areas omitted	<input type="checkbox"/> Covers most key areas but with minor gaps.	<input type="checkbox"/> Elicits detailed, relevant swallowing history (onset, food/drink types, frequency, safety issues, impact on daily life, work). Probes appropriately	20
Communication & Empathy	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor communication, jargon-heavy, little empathy.	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited empathy or inconsistent clarity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Generally clear and empathetic with minor lapses.	<input type="checkbox"/> Builds strong rapport, uses clear lay language, empathetic tone.	20

Image: Revised rubrics for marking OSCEs

Based on discussions from Day 2, the department has pursued opportunities for interprofessional collaboration. A notable partnership was established with the Maxillofacial Surgery Unit of the Faculty of Dentistry, through an initiative led by Dr Sumudu Madwala (also a participant at this workshop) to foster joint clinical care and research. This marks the department's first clinical collaboration with dental sciences. As a result of this engagement, several promising research collaborations are now being planned.



Image: A team from the Department of Disability Studies, specialised in adult swallowing disorders and their management, visited the Faculty of Dental Sciences, University of Peradeniya, at the invitation of Dr Sumudu Madawala from the Department of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery, FDS, UoP

Based on Day 3's emphasis on interprofessional education, the staff reviewed upcoming semesters to identify modules, including the mandatory core research project that could be conducted jointly by Speech and Hearing Sciences and Occupational Therapy students. The objective is to foster early opportunities for interprofessional learning.

In terms of research, a study is currently underway exploring the implementation of Team-Based Learning (TBL) in a low-resource setting. This mixed-method study investigates the impact of TBL on knowledge gain and student engagement, and the contextual challenges and opportunities associated with adopting active learning methodologies in the Sri Lankan higher education. The project aims to generate evidence-based insights to guide the sustainable integration of TBL into undergraduate health professions curricula in resource-limited academic environments.

Dinushee Atapattu Bakmeewewa

Head/ Senior Lecturer

Department of Disability Studies

Participant in the March-April 2025 workshop