Developmental Trajectory of Clinical Psychology Competencies across Domains

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Background

• Field placements integral to professional psychology training

• Multiple placements offer experience in a range of settings

• Developmental model ...

Build skills
Developing attributes
Bridging theoretical knowledge and competence

TIME
Background

Competence: Habitual and judicious use communication, knowledge and technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values, reflection in practice (Epstein & Hundert, 2002).

- Systematic monitoring and measurement
- Benchmarking over time
- Feedback

FOUNDATIONAL
Attitudinal-based
Professional and ethical conduct/attitudes, interpersonal skills, reflective practice

FUNCTIONAL
Knowledge-based
Scientist-practitioner approach, psychometric, assessment and intervention skills

(Fouad et al., 2002)
Background

• Benchmarked across developmental stages – reflecting increased competence across multiple placements

• *Assumption*: Functional and foundational competencies have similar developmental trajectories.

• Little empirical research investigating stage-wise progression towards competence across domains
Aim and Hypotheses

• Progression of competencies across four placements (P1, P2, P3, P4) in various settings (P1 in university clinic, 200 hrs)

• 4 (Placement) x 10 (9 domains, mean of all domains)

• **H1:** Increase in competency ratings across placements

• **H2:** Competency ratings of attitudinal-based domains (foundational) higher than knowledge-based domains (functional)

• **H3:** Ratings of knowledge-based domains (functional) showing linear increase across all placements but ratings of attitudinal-based domains (foundational) peaking early (i.e. high scores at early placements with smaller increases)
Method

- End-Placement competencies scores across four placements
- Online *Clinical Psychology Practicum Competencies Rating Scale (CΨPRS)*
- Assessments made by placement supervisors
- Five Australian universities (WSU, UOW, MQ, UN, UNSW) in 2012
- Accredited clinical psychology training programmes (Masters or doctoral)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Placement</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>236</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competency</td>
<td>Domain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Functional</td>
<td>Counselling Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Clinical Assessment Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Case Formulation skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Intervention Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Scientist Practitioner Approach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Psychometric Skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundational</td>
<td>Ethical Attitude and Behaviour</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Skills</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflective Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response to Supervision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Method

- 51 items
  - 10 **overall domain scores**
  - 41 specific items

![Professional Skills Table]

- Comparing performance with stage-based categories: Beginner (Stage 1) to Competent (Stage 4)
- Score /10
Results

**Main effect of Domain, \( p = .00 \)**

![Bar chart showing mean scores for various domains]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Mean Score /10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>9.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical Assessment</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case Formulation</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>9.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethical Attitude &amp; Behaviour</td>
<td>9.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scientist-Practitioner</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Skills</td>
<td>9.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Practice</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to Supervision</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEAN</td>
<td>9.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Results**

*Main effect of Domain, $p = .00$*

![Bar chart showing the mean scores for different domains.](chart.png)
Results

Main effect of Placement, $p = .00$
Results

Main effect of Placement, $p = .00$
Results

Main effect of Placement, $p = .00$
Results

Placement*Domain, p = .00
Results

Mean Score /10

Placement

Professional Skills
Response to Supervision
MEAN
Results

Mean Score /10

Placement

Counselling
Scientist-Practitioner
Reflective Practice
MEAN

1 2 3 4
Conclusion

- Competency scores increase across placements 1 - 3
- Competency scores higher for *foundational* vs. *functional* competencies

  Ethical attitude & behaviour
  Response to supervision
  Professional skills

  Clinical assessment
  Case formulation
  Intervention

- Competency domains follow different developmental trajectories
  - *All functional competencies* + *Reflective practice and Ethical Attitude & behaviour* show significant increase between placements 2 and 3
  - *Response to supervision and Professional skills (Foundational)* score highly from placement 1 and show additional improvements only at placements 3 and 4
Implications

• Leniency bias early in training for Ethical attitude & behaviour, Response to supervision and Professional skills (foundational competencies) (Gonsalvez et al., in press)

• Scores greater than 8.5 at Placement 1 and 2

• Greater attention paid to foundational competencies early in training

• Selection of students WITH foundational competencies

• Difficulties defining objective criteria

• Vignette-based ratings with normative reference point (Gonsalvez et al., 2013)
For more information ...

Please visit our website for information on our OLT funded project: Assessing Competence in Psychology Practicum: Vignette-Matching Project (VMP)


References


Super-Clusters

Mean Score /10

Placement

- Foundational
- Functional
- Mean

$p = .00$
Super-Clusters

Mean Score /10 vs Placement

- Foundational
- Functional
- Mean