

## Australia-ASEAN Academics Forum: Online Education during COVID-19 and Beyond

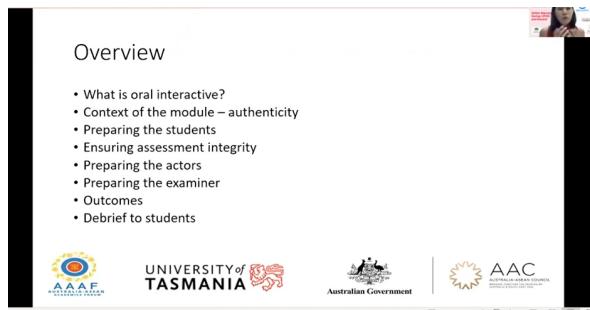
AAAF Dr Lim Sok Mui May talk 8th Sep 2021

Transcript



Okay, all right, let's get started. Hi, my name is May and I work in the Singapore Institute of Technology. And Singapore Institute of Technology is very young. We are the fifth university in Singapore. I am really hoping that when COVID is over, we can welcome you to visit our campus. We are in an old campus right now but the picture that you see is where we will be in a few years' time in 2024 if all the progressive renovation and everything go ahead as planned.

So, as introduced, my background is in occupational therapy but currently I also double head as the director to look after the teaching and learning centre in Singapore Institute of Technology. One of the things that in our university we've been trying to drive more is on authentic assessment, because we are particularly interested in applied learning. And with authentic assessment, I think we were making good progress, but obviously, when COVID hit, how do you do applied learning, how do you do authentic assessment online? That becomes much more challenging when we are limited to online. So therefore, I'm going to be sharing a little bit about one of the initiatives that I start within the module itself. So today, when I'm presenting, I probably will be wearing the head as a faculty in occupational therapy not so much of the director of the teaching and learning centre. But I'm happy to discuss that later on. Before that, I'm just going to start with a video and I hope you can hear the video well.



[video plays]

All right, did you manage to hear the video? Yes, thumbs up, great, all right. I will walk through with you what is our interactive assessment and the context of the module and why we wanted to push for authenticity. We will talk a little bit about how did we go about preparing the students and what we did in terms of preparing and ensuring assessment integrity. Then we'll move on to talking about preparing the actors or the person with disability to do the job, and then about preparing the examiners who are involved. Then finally, I'll walk you through some of the outcomes as a result of this initiative and the debrief that we do with students after the assessment.

### What is Oral Interactive

- An interactive oral : an opportunity for **genuine and unscripted interaction between a student and other students or a student and an examiner** (Sotiriadou, Logan, Daly, & Guest, 2019)
- Specifically, students can demonstrate knowledge verbally in an authentic setting representative of what would be encountered in the workplace (Beccaria, 2013).
- **Not a question and answer test**, but rather an exchange which draws upon the student's understanding, and creates a setting in which they can demonstrate and apply course concepts. (Logan, Sotiriadou, Daly, & Guest, 2020)

A little bit of background. If you are new to the term oral interactive. And oral interactive assessment is an opportunity for genuine and unscripted interaction between students and other students or students and examiner. I think the highlight here is about that genuine and unscripted interaction that we are trying to get to. So specifically, the students demonstrate their knowledge by verbally talking about what's going on in an authentic as possible setting, or what would be encountered at the workplace. It is really not a question-and-answer test, so not so much of just replicating whatever is going on the traditional exam question and just asking them, but it really should be an exchange that draws upon the students' understanding and create a setting where they can demonstrate and they can apply the course concept. And I think the focus is about the exchange that is going on between the student as well as who's examining them.

### Authentic assessment + Competency

Interactive Oral assessments

- develop the student's professional skills,
- enhance their employability prospects,
- ensure a high standard of academic integrity
- Enable students to develop their professional identity
- develop communications skills

The more relevant the assessment to real world scenarios, the less likely students are to engage in misconduct

It is an authentic assessment and it drives at actually assessing competency because it gives the opportunity for us to develop students' professional skills, enhance their employability prospects. We are able to use oral test assessment well and ensure the high standard of assessment academic integrity. And at the same time, this is opportunity for them to develop their professional identity, thinking that you have to speak like a professional, act as a professional and behave like a professional. And one important part is about the ability to help them develop their communication skills. The more relevant the assessment is to the real-world scenario, the more likely the students are going to do this well and not want to cheat or engage in academic misconduct, and we'll share more about that in a bit.

### Context of the module

- Occupational performance across lifespan
- First year
- Team base learning



So, first of all, maybe to let you know the context of the module that I taught in. So, I teach in the first-year module, and this is first year, trimester two. So, students have been with us for about three months. The module is called occupational performance across lifespan, and in this module we introduce them from cradle to death about babies, about early childhood, about middle childhood, teenagers, adults, and eventually about old age and dying. In the module, the pedagogy we use is team-based learning approach, which means instead of attending lecture, the student actually have got some pre-recorded lecture they could watch, they have material to read, and when they come into assessment, they come into session every week of the session, they are assessed individually first about their understanding of the pre-reading material, and then they are assessed as a group. What we do as the staff is that behind the scenes we are analysing the results and then we are giving them that just-in-time mini lecture where we can go into the details of what they've understood or they've not understood. And following this core group experience, we then break them down into tutorial groups and go into case study and so on. So, this is the overall pedagogy behind, but that's not the crutch of the oral interactive assessment.

Outline of topics

S/No	Topics/ Content
2	Human Performance – the Developmental Theories
3	Newborn and Infancy – First year of life
4	Early Childhood — Toddlerhood
5	Early Childhood – Development in Preschool Years
6	Middle Childhood and School
7	Adolescence
8	Adolescent
9	Adulthood
10	Late adulthood
11	Widowhood and grieving
12	Life before dying and Death

A bit of outline of the topic. As I mentioned, so we go from infant to childhood to dying. And the oral interactive assessment that I'm doing happens at week eight, which means I'm testing them on the material they have understood from week two to week six, all the way from newborn to middle childhood.

### Why the decision to change?

- Previously assess students via MCQ and short answer mid-term test
- Common feedback and struggle that students can do well in paper-based test but cannot articulate their reasoning – found on clinical practice
- Testing ability to articulate is much more real compared to testing knowledge
- How to do this online?

This is not the first year we are running the assessment, and in fact, last year we wondered should we change it or should we just keep going as we have done previously. So, why the desire to

change? Previously, when it comes to week 8, what we do is that we give them a paper-based assessment which means we ask an MCQ question and short answer. We've done it on paper, we've managed to also migrate it into the learning management system and test them online with lockdown browser. But what is troubling me is that I find that students, when they go out on clinical placement, they struggle in terms of articulating their reasoning, which means when they meet a real parent, a real caregiver who is concerned, this student could have scored 80% on the exam but somehow the words are not coming out of their mouth to explain why is the child behaving this way, what are some things you would recommend to do and so on. So, something is not right there if they can do so well in MCQ and paper but then yet it's not coming out.

So, perhaps there is really a real need for us to prepare them more and test and give them feedback about how they are articulating the information versus just testing the knowledge, which is what we've been focusing on in the past few years. And I guess the other challenge is how do we do this online because of COVID, so that we could actually be very versatile, whether it's face to face or online, can still happen. So, how was it done?

Format – what is explained to students

- Enter waiting room 10 min before session, wait to be admitted
- Check that scenario is recorded
- Greet and introduce yourself to the parent (actor), check if parent can hear you
- Parent will give some brief information on his/her child/children. He/she will ask you some questions
- Answer questions one at a time.
- Total of 4 – 5 questions
- One of the questions, parents will ask for specific suggestions
- Once all the questions are answered, parents will thank you.
- Session will end between 8-9 minutes. (1 min for the technicality/ transition)



This is the format, and this was what was explained to students. We used zoom and we scheduled for them to actually come into sessions by sessions, so each student will be meeting with one standardized patient, or standardized parents we call, which is acted by a person with disability. They will enter a waiting room 10 minutes before when they are going to be accessed and they will wait to be admitted. We will ensure that their assessment is being recorded so that we could review it, especially when moderating the mark or when giving feedback to the students. When students enter the session, the first thing they do is to introduce themselves professionally to the parents or the actor and check whether they, the parents, can hear them. Then the parents will go about giving some information about his or her child or children and ask some question. What the student needs to do is to answer one question at a time and, within the ten minutes, cover around that four to five questions. And after the question is asked, some parents might go into asking for some specific suggestion or in that exchange ask for clarification. At the end of this, the parents will thank the student and that's it. We will transition to the next student. So, the prof is behind the scenes marking, while the actor is the one who is interacting with the student.

Sample assessment

I am concerned that my 11-month-old baby cries whenever he sees a stranger.

i) He was not like that before. He does not used to cry so much when he was younger. Is it because of CoVID19 that we are going out less? Is he getting less sociable?

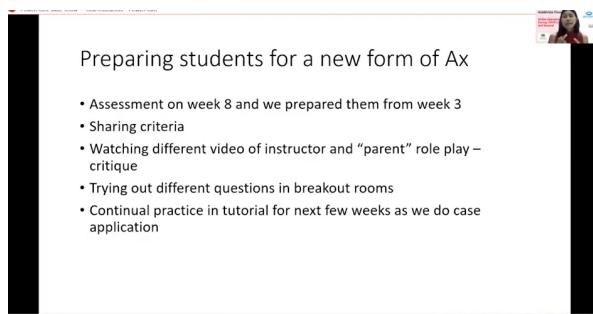
ii) Should I be concerned?

iii) When he turns 1 years old, what are some milestones I should be looking out for?

iv) His older brother who is 3 years old tend to be rough when trying to play with him or hug him. Is this normal?



This is an example of what assessment look like. So, if I am the actor, I would come in and say oh, I'm really, really concerned that my 11-month-old baby is crying whenever he sees a stranger. You know, he wasn't like this before. He was really cheerful when he was younger. Is this because of COVID? Is it because we are going out less? Why is he getting less sociable? Students would have to answer that and link it to a developmental milestones relating to stranger anxiety, about their understanding of attachment theory and why is this considered normal or not. Okay, so the parents might go on to say oh, what, should I be concerned? Can you explain to me what's going on? And then they will move on to the next question to say well, you know what, he's going to turn one soon. What are some milestones I should be looking out for, and what can I do with my child? So, this is again a chance for the student to impress the parents or share with some of the understanding of milestone about walking, about fine motor skills, about the toys to introduce and what to look out for. Now the parents might be asking oh, I also have an older child who's three years old. He tends to be really rough when playing with the baby. Is this normal? Should I be concerned? So, now is the student's time to explain about three years old calibration, how much force do they understand and so on. So, I hope you get the idea. It is about an interaction between a parent and a student, but obviously this parent has been scripted and is acted by a person with disability, and the student's role is to really articulate what they've understood for the past seven weeks of learning all about the milestone, about developmental theory, in a very real context to answer the concern. And this is really similar to what will be happening in the clinical setting when we actually meet parents who have concern about their children.

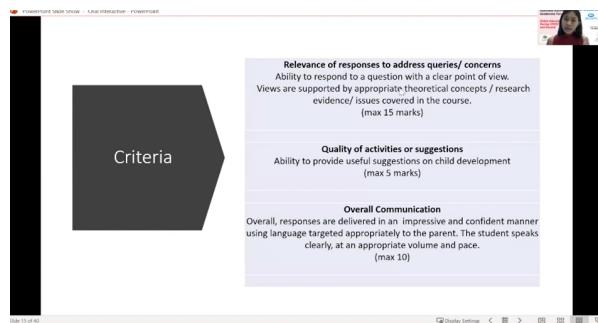


Preparing students for a new form of Ax

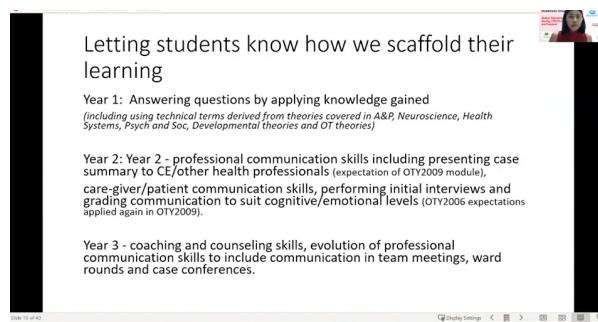
- Assessment on week 8 and we prepared them from week 3
- Sharing criteria
- Watching different video of instructor and "parent" role play – critique
- Trying out different questions in breakout rooms
- Continual practice in tutorial for next few weeks as we do case application

Let me talk to you about preparing the students. So obviously, this is not the final assessment they are used to. They are very used to MCQ. How did we go about preparing them? What we did was, the assessment was in week eight, but as soon as week three, we started preparing them. We shared with them the criteria, we started acting. So, myself and one of my colleagues, Isho, we role play so that we could record it, and we role play as an example of a student who's really struggling on giving a very basic answer, almost like a one of those conversations you could ask anybody in the bus stop and actually get some advice from any parents kind of answer, versus a professional answer of what a professional will be explaining. And we ask students to critique, to say where do you think this person is? Is it a 'b' or 'a'? What are some of the highlight and so on. And then we break students up into breakout rooms so that they could practice different sessions, different questions, with their fellow classmates. And remember, I talked to you about the team-based learning. Every single week, we have tutorial time, and the tutorial is about case study. So, during those case study, we always try to find opportunity when student is articulating to tell them, don't just tell me the answer. Talk to me as though I'm a parent. So that across the different week, week four, week five, week six and so on, they are constantly having the chance to practice talking to someone and explaining. Because you realize, it's very easy to write something on the whiteboard or on the big piece of paper and explain your thing in very technical language, but once you try to articulate it out

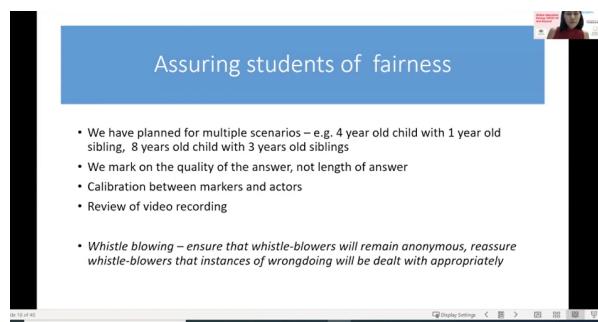
as though you're talking to a parent, that's where they really struggle. But with many practices it gets better.



This is the marking criteria. We've gave marks relating to the relevance of the response, the ability to respond with a clear perspective, and the other answers is supported either by a theoretical concept, research or issues that are covered in the course. We look for the quality of their suggestions or the activities, when overall, we also look at the ability to communicate: whether is it delivered in an impressive and confident manner, is it targeted at language that is appropriate for the parents, and the pace and volume and so on.

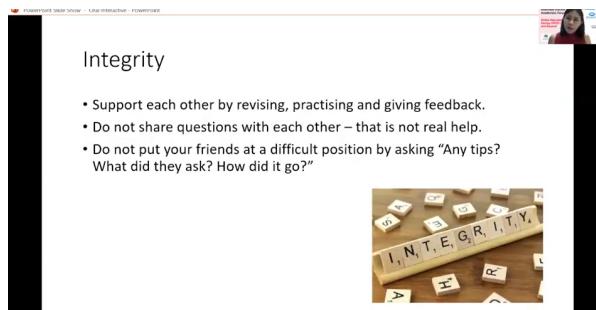


The important message of this slide is to tell you it's important to let students know where this is going. We let them know how this is scaffolding their learning in the entire four years. So, we tell them in year one, you're just answering questions. In year two, you will be expected to answer, listen in for more things and try to explain further and clarify. In year three, we are expecting you to demonstrate some coaching skills, some counselling skills. So, whatever you're doing in year one in this assessment is really just the beginning. It will get more complicated as we go. But it is actually linked ultimately to the clinical practice.



Next, how do we go about ensuring fairness and assessment integrity? This is very intentional, we cover this in week three, talking to the students about it so that they can plan for it. Ultimately, these are year one students, so they are still very new and they are also sussing out to what extent is cheating taken seriously. First of all, we have planned for multiple scenarios, which means across

different days, different time slot, they are going to get different scenarios. Some of them are going to get a four-year-old child with a one-year-old brother, some are eight years old with a three-year-old sibling, someone's going to get a tween. So there are multiple scenarios and if you really choose to tip your friend off, chances is you're going to distract them and actually get something wrong because there's so many different scenarios to pick from. We emphasize to students that we are marking on the quality of the answer not the length of the answer. We calibrate between the different markers and the different actors, even how they act. And we also review the recording to ensure that in the event things go too quickly we can double check and actually moderate the answers. We actually also told students about whistleblowing, and that in the event they know that there are a group of students or some students who are plotting to cheat, they can choose to whistleblow and we will protect their anonymity. Of course, we will have to deal with the wrongdoing and at the same time investigate whether it's true. But I think this is sending down the signal to the student as well that we do not tolerate cheating and if you know your friend is planning to do that we will protect you if you actually come and tell us.

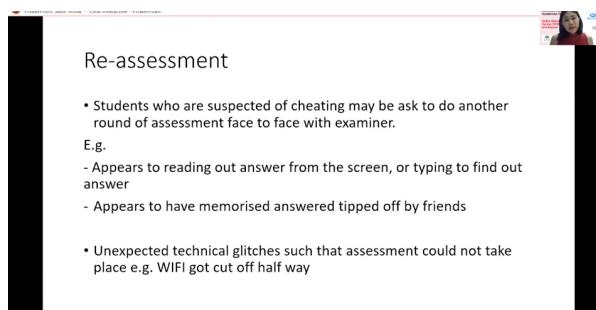


Integrity

- Support each other by revising, practising and giving feedback.
- Do not share questions with each other – that is not real help.
- Do not put your friends at a difficult position by asking "Any tips? What did they ask? How did it go?"



Importantly, I think the year one student, especially being young and innocent, sometimes they are overly helpful. So we tell them what does integrity means to you? It means supporting each other by practicing, by giving feedback, by revising. But when you share the test question with someone else, this is not real help. And please do not put your friend in difficult position by asking oh, do you have any tip for me, how did it go, anything to help me focus on my study. Because then, you're kind of really testing your friend on how much they are willing to share with you. If you are a real friend, don't put your friend in those difficulties situation. So, we have conversation about this in order to really drive home why is it important to practice with integrity, especially if the ultimate aim is for you to be trained as a professional, to be as professional as can be.



Re-assessment

- Students who are suspected of cheating may be asked to do another round of assessment face to face with examiner.

E.g.

- Appears to be reading out answer from the screen, or typing to find out answer
- Appears to have memorised answers tipped off by friends

- Unexpected technical glitches such that assessment could not take place e.g. WiFi got cut off half way

We also tell them the option of reassessment, not options, but actually, the reassessment practice, that if we suspect them of cheating we can go and try another round of assessment and this time face to face with the examiner. So, example will be if they appear to be reading up from the screen or trying to type to find the answer, or they seem that they have really memorized the thing that said exactly the same of the friends, these are examples where we won't just say that you get zero

or fail, but what we will do is that we will pick another situation on the spot and give them a longer assessment face to face. So, many students really doesn't want this to happen. So when they know this, they are also extremely careful. This is also possible because in the event there is a technical glitch, a little bit like what happened this morning just now, if this is going to be disadvantaging students, we want to tell them that we will give them a reassessment in a case this takes place. Okay, a little bit about preparing our actors.



Preparing our actors

- Opportunities to introduce work to person with disabilities
- Know their disability and activity tolerance of doing this for full day
- Dry run
- Sharing what they can or cannot repeat, how much prompt is appropriate
- Feedback to our actors

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We saw this as an opportunity to introduce work to person with disability. As you know, with the COVID, a lot of jobs got destroyed. It's actually really hard to find job. There are so many unemployed people, especially for a person with disability, to be looking for a job opportunity is extremely hard. It is made harder because of the economic situation. So, if we decide to actually work with a person's disability, importantly we need to know their disability and their activity tolerance, whether are they able to sit the whole day for this, are they able to read, are they able to articulate. And we need to test it out. We have dry run with them. We also prepare them by telling them and sharing with them what they can or cannot repeat and what is some, what kind of some problems that are appropriate. Because sometimes, they want to be overly helpful to the students because they say, poor thing, it looks like really stress. Can I help them out? So, we have to really be strict to say we cannot be not fair to certain students. And we give feedback to them during the acting in order to make sure things are in line.



Preparing our examiners

- Getting to know the actors
- Rating samples of students' oral assessment
- Moderation and discussion of expectations
- Familiarity of technology

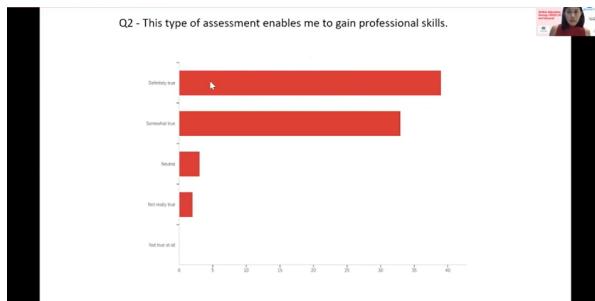
Something about preparing our examiner. We have two examiners this time around. And we'll have more in the future. Is getting to know the actors, giving samples of the oral assessment beforehand, so that we could grade. And after that, we talk about the moderation and the discussion of expectation and getting familiar with the technology.



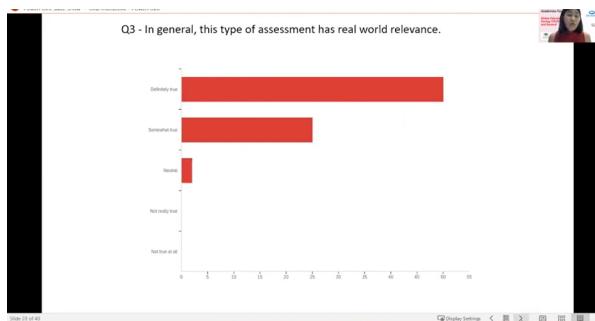
Here are some outcomes.



Okay, so the first one say the type of assessment enables me to gain professional skills. As you can see, quite a big majority feel that it's definitely true and some of them actually think that it's a little bit contrived, but these are the minority.



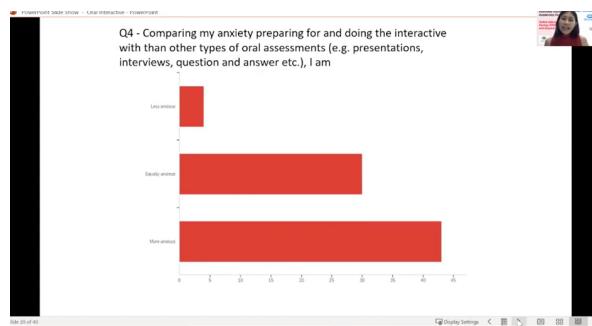
The second question, this assessment enabled me to gain professional skills.



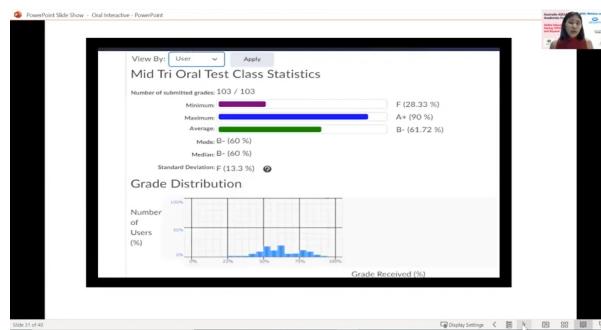
The third one, which is a score really high this time, of assessment has real-world relevance.



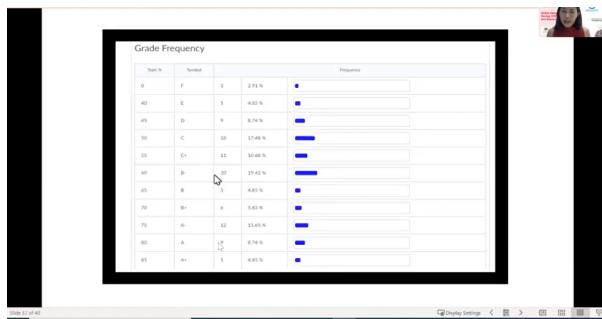
This is an interesting one. We ask them after the oral interactive, do you feel more confident, same confident or less confident about their ability to explain their point of view across. Interestingly, some students with a lot of practice, they feel more confident. Some remain the same, but the one with less confident are also the one probably that they have done so much work in writing it down and they haven't practiced. And having the chance to do it with the parents, they realize that it's really not as easy as I imagined it to be, especially with the performance anxiety coming in.



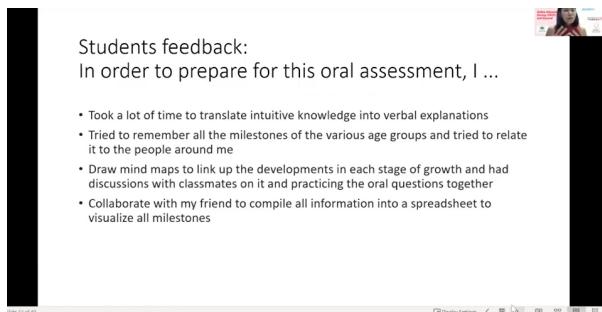
We asked them, comparing to your anxiety with doing oral interactive versus other kind of assessment, do you, are you less anxious, equally anxious or more anxious. As you can see, it is 10 minutes but actually majority of students are more anxious. It's something that we haven't trained our students well for, because I guess with the first 17 years of education, it has been a lot of writing. And when it comes to presentation, it's often PowerPoint that you can script and memorize, whereas this is an exchange which is not a kind of typical assessment that they are used to.



When it comes to assessment grade, it's really, really interesting to see how diverse it is. We have a few handful of students who got A plus.



Like five of them, and nine got A all the way to 3 with F and 5 with E. You can see how it really spread out and differentiate the students with different abilities.



Students feedback:

In order to prepare for this oral assessment, I ...

- Took a lot of time to translate intuitive knowledge into verbal explanations
- Tried to remember all the milestones of the various age groups and tried to relate it to the people around me
- Draw mind maps to link up the developments in each stage of growth and had discussions with classmates on it and practicing the oral questions together
- Collaborate with my friend to compile all information into a spreadsheet to visualize all milestones

Some of the feedback as well, we ask students what did you do in order to prepare for this. Some students say, I took a lot of time to translate intuitive knowledge into verbal explanation. Another one say, I try to remember milestone of different age group and try to relate to people around me. Some were practicing with their mother, some were practicing with their friends, some students talk about drawing mind maps to link up the different stages of growth and discuss with their classmates to practice oral question. Another one talk about collaboration with friends to compile information into a spreadsheet and to visualize all the milestones. On Monday, one of the sessions I attended, we were talking about how do we build connectivity between students, how do we actually support student peer learning. I think assessment provides that opportunity. When we give an assessment like this to say that there's no way you can just memorize it and keep looking at your textbook and screen, you need to practice, this assessment provided that context, to link up with another peer to test each other, to give each other's feedback. So I think we can be quite clever and intentional in terms of using assessment and using those formative feedback as a chance for them to learn from peers. What happens after?



Debrief to students

So, we do debrief to the students because it's important for them to learn.

Debrief

- Highlighted what was done well
- Went through range of acceptable answers
- Watch video of an A student's recording

(Slide 21 of 40)

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You highlight what was done well. We went through the range of acceptable answer. We also got the permission of students who have got A and show them this is what we mean by really good answer. And after watching one or two, they were, wow, this is impressive. They could really see example what is it like to do it really, really well.

Coaching students who were disappointed

- Watch their video clip with them
- Asked them what would they do differently
- Discussed expectation

(Slide 22 of 40)

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And of course, we will have a whole range of students who were disappointed. They put in so much effort but they didn't get the A that they wanted. What do we do with them? Some of them will email me and say oh, I'm really disappointed with my grade. I don't know what I can do. And I'm always very clear that I'm not talking about remarking here because I would have watched that clip and I would have watch it with someone else and decide on the marks. But what we'll do is we'll visit their video clip again and I will use that coaching approach where I will pause. Instead of telling them the right answer I would ask them. Now, how would you have answered this question, assuming you're doing it for a second time. And they would try it and they were a little no, no that's not good enough, give me a try, different try. And we will talk about expectation: what does A and B or C means to you, so that it's not so much of just trying to repeat the right answer but really getting them to watch. And many of the time when they watch those recordings, it's very enlightening for them to see why were they so deserving of a C versus a B or A and what else could they work on. And we kind of debrief about is it the anxiety, is it a knowledge, or is it lack of practice. And they were able to tell, to say, I think I've been writing too much but I didn't talk enough, so I need to work on that in the future. I think this is an important part of the feedback loop from preparation to the end, where they actually understand where they were going wrong and what else can be done.

Learning points

- Preparing and practicing with students is important
- Opportunity of persons with disability to work from home and contribute to a meaningful work
- Oral interactive assess more than knowledge, also skills
- Effective use of time – 2 days versus one week of marking

(Slide 23 of 40)

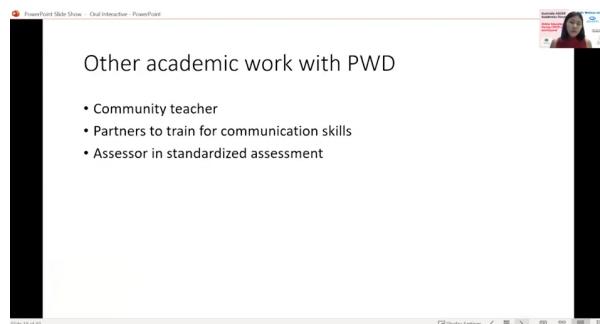
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Let me summarize some of the learning points. First of all, I feel that the preparing and the practicing of students is important, particularly in such an anxiety provoking assessment. To not just throw them and surprise them within week 8, but to early preparation along the way. I am very happy that this has provided an opportunity for persons with disability to work from home and to actually contribute meaningful work. And I'll share with you in the next slide that this is not the only assessment. We have other opportunity that we've been getting them involved. I think oral interactive assessment assess far more than knowledge but also the skills in articulating, in justifying, defending. We are only doing it in a very basic way. In year three, if we are really getting them to do coaching, we will be getting them to even listening in and asking the right question. So, more to come for the students. And in terms of time, many people are saying that oh, we don't have time to do this, it sounds a terrible amount of work. But to be honest, it is two full days of marking, maybe half a day of watching. Some of the things that we wrote down is unusual. This is far better than having one whole week of marking essays, of marking short answers and so on. So, in terms of time effectiveness, if you actually plan for two or three days or whatever, depending on your class size on it, it is far more effective than doing lots and lots of marking. And I think it's something that the student enjoy, we enjoy, and the actors as well could see their part they play in making this enjoyable and meaningful.



PowerPoint Slide Show - Oral Interactive - PowerPoint

Other academic work with PWD

- Community teacher
- Partners to train for communication skills
- Assessor in standardized assessment

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We do other work with a person with disability. We hire them as community teachers to teach our students in the community how they take train, how they go to the supermarket. Our personal disability are partners to train for communication skills, to test our students, like asking them questions in very broken English, in dialects, to see how the students react, and they are also helping us in the standardized assessment. So this is not the only chance, but there is a range of opportunity where we could work with quite a number of different person with disabilities.

And that's it. I would really love to hear some questions.