

engage in PAL in their pre-clinical years however PAL activities in clinical placements are not formalised. This research aimed to identify students' and educators' use and perceptions of PAL during clinical placements to develop recommendations for PAL in clinical settings.

**Methods:** A tri-phasic study was designed using Biggs' Constructive Alignment as a framework to characterise students' PAL experiences, examining the intended, enacted, and perceived curriculum. Year 3 was the focus of the study, as this first clinical year contains many unstructured learning opportunities which may afford PAL. Research methods comprised a curriculum map (Phase 1), student survey and an observational study of the students on their clinical placements (Phase 2), and interviews with experienced educators (Phase 3).

**Results:** Whilst the curriculum map identified few explicit learning objectives relating to PAL, students reported participation in PAL activities during clinical placements on average 20 times per week. Observations supported this reported frequency of peer interactions: two-thirds of students' time was spent in the company of peers. Survey and interview data revealed that students valued teaching and feedback from peers, but doubted the accuracy of peer-generated information. The roles of 'feedback giver' and 'observer' were less valued by students. Significantly more female students reported that PAL contributed to a safe learning environment than males. PAL activities were reported to contribute to students' evaluative judgement: the comprehension of and ability to judge performance against notions of quality. Educator involvement was perceived to be a key ingredient for successful PAL. These data were used to develop a PAL Activity Matrix, which identified activities students could partake in within a clinical environment to optimise their learning. In Phase 3, expert educators reported the study findings

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### **A microanalytic assessment of self-regulatory processes of medical students during a biomedical science learning task**

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**Introduction:** There is evidence that academic success of medical students is related to their use of self-regulated learning (SRL) processes (1). The aim of this thesis was to utilise a SRL microanalytic assessment method in medical education 1) to identify the SRL processes of medical students for selected SRL measures during a biomedical science learning task, 2) to investigate the associations of SRL measures with students' biomedical science performance, 3) to examine the associations of SRL measures with the sex of medical students and 4) to test the correlations between the various SRL measures of three phases of self-regulation.

**Methods:** 76 Year 1 medical students were recruited based on their prior performance in biomedical science exams and stratified into previous high and low performers. A SRL microanalytic interview was administered during a biomedical science learning task; Questions regarding forethought phase (self-efficacy, goal setting and strategic planning

measures), performance phase (metacognitive monitoring measure) and self-reflection phase (causal attributions and adaptive inferences measures) were asked before, during and after completing the task, respectively. Verbal responses were recorded verbatim and afterwards coded by two independent assessors. kappa coefficient of 0.89-0.98 was attained by two coders. Information was processed by descriptive and inferential statistics.

**Results:** Descriptive statistics showed that most participants (88.2–43.4%) reported task-specific processes for SRL measures. Multiple logistic regression analyses revealed that Students who exhibited higher self-efficacy (odds ratio [OR] 1.48, 95% confidence interval [CI] 1.03–2.12) and reported task-specific processes for metacognitive monitoring (OR 9.04, 95% CI 1.37–59.64) and causal attributions (OR 9.8, 95% CI 1.96–39.34) measures were more likely to be high previous performers. Only the causal attributions measure (OR 23, 95% CI 4.57–115.76) was associated with the learning task performance. Univariate analyses demonstrated that low previous female performers had significantly lower self-efficacy beliefs than low previous male performers ( $p = 0.035$ ). There were no sex differences on any of the other microanalytic measures ( $p > 0.05$ ). Phi coefficient revealed significant correlations between several SRL measures within and across the three phases.

**Discussion:** We identified important associations between SRL microanalytic measures and previous biomedical science performance and subsequent performance on a biomedical science learning task. We also recognized high levels of inter-rater reliability and significant relationships between the SRL measures of three phases of self-regulation. Comparing our findings with wider context of using SRL microanalytic approaches in science learning demonstrated that a SRL microanalytic protocol can detect differences in self-regulatory processes throughout the three phases of cyclical model of SRL among participants at different levels of prior science achievement (2).

**Conclusion:** These findings have implications to offer the educators a framework for providing feedback on SRL processes which is essential for effective feedback and improving performance. There are also potential applications for directing the content of formal remediation interventions in the early years of medical school.

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**Developing an optimal model for sequential OSCE using CTT and IRT based psychometric properties**

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**Introduction:** In objective structured clinical examination (OSCE), an increase in the number of stations is associated with an increase in reliability, but is more resource-consuming. Hence, sequential testing has been proposed in which all students first participate in a short test. Students who fail this test will participate in the supplementary OSCE. The results of the screening test should be able to predict the students' performance in the main test with a reasonable accuracy. The purpose of this dissertation was to introduce an optimal screening test based on the following factors: number of screening test stations, method of selecting screening test stations, and the cut-scores of the screening test

**Methods:** We used two datasets from a 10-station OSCE. Psychometric properties of stations were determined according to classical test theory (CTT) and item response theory (IRT). Then, several hypothetical screening tests were designed with different numbers of stations (three modes), different psychometric properties (5 modes in CTT and 2 modes in IRT), and different cut-scores (two levels: normal and stringent). Each hypothetical screening was compared to the main test. A desirable composite outcome was defined for each screening test, comprising of: passing percentage of more than 50%, positive predictive value (PPV) equal to one, and negative predictive value (NPV) greater than 0.25

**Results:** The OSCEs failure rates were 5.7% ( $n=6$ ) and 10.9% ( $n=29$ ) in 2011 and 2013, respectively. According to CTT-based screening tests, 20 out of 60 hypothetical OSCEs yielded the desirable outcome. Fourteen out of these 20 tests had stringent pass levels. The number of stations were as follows: 9 tests had five stations, 5 tests had four stations and 6 tests had three stations. According to IRT-based screening tests, 2 out of 6 OSCEs had the desirable outcome. Both these tests were composed of stations with high discrimination value and had stringent cut-score. One test had 5 stations, and the other had 4 stations.

**Discussion:** We proposed and evaluated an optimal model for the sequential design of an OSCE. While several studies have investigated different aspects of sequential OSCE, we believe this dissertation adds to the existing literature in several ways: For designing the screening OSCEs, we simultaneously considered three factors: number of stations, criteria for selection, and the cut-off score. None of the previous studies have taken all three parameters into account in their model. We also defined a composite outcome for evaluating the accuracy of the screening tests, while previous studies have considered various separate