

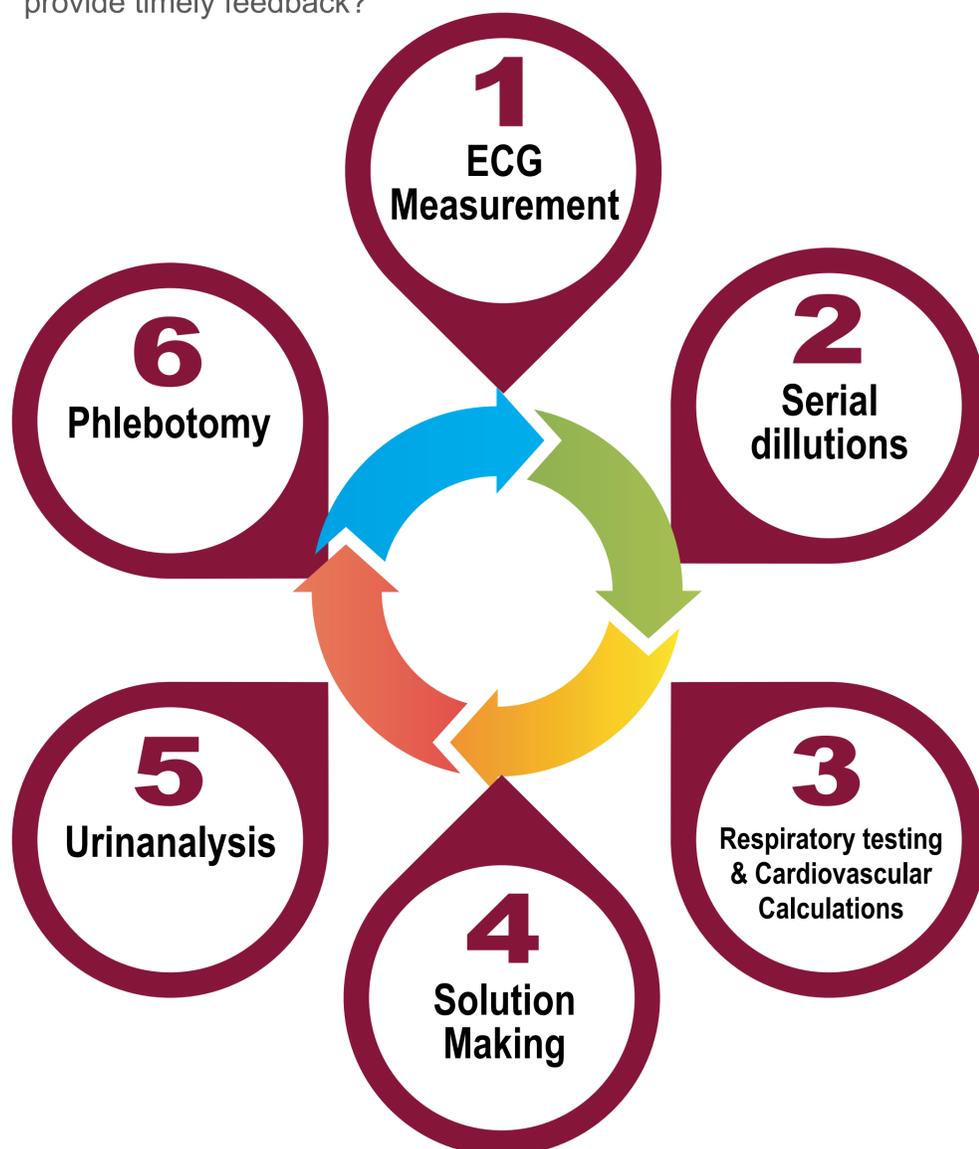
Adapting Objective Structured Practical Examinations (OSPE's) to assess clinically-related science skills

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Introduction

- Objective Structured Practical Examination (OSPE) assessments - assess theoretical, practical and problem-solving skills at multiple stations.
- Marking criteria structured and published in advance.
- Students receive the same test and interaction with different examiners.
- Six stations, each assessing a mixture of different skills (Figure 1).
- Would this method be suitable to assess Honours sciences students in practical and communications skills?
- Is it an efficient method to assess a large Honours class and provide timely feedback?



Advantages

Can assess a range of graduate attributes not easily accomplished via traditional assessment methods

Students often try much harder to succeed as they cannot hide behind written work or group work

Easily adaptable for different skills, disciplines and locations

Fast and easy way to assess practical skills in large groups of students

Disadvantages

Lot of effort to initially set up

Planning and organisation are key to success

Some nervous students need reassurance if previously reliant on written work

Need backup plans

Outline Protocol

- 100 students over 2 assessment days
- Assessment tasks introduced during an all day practical class

- VLE resources/extra tuition provided
- Students move round each station for assessment

- Objective and consistent
- Stations reusable and adaptable

Outcomes & Conclusions

- Students reported they found the process “a bit stressful” as they had to prove they knew how to perform specific tasks/skills.
- However, found it worthwhile preparation for upcoming practical work and employment opportunities.
- Staff felt it was a useful way of assessing wide array of graduate attributes at Honours level WITHOUT large amounts of paperwork.
- However, requires planning, clear aims and flexibility in initial stages (Figure 2).
- Students reported thinking more about skills expected in future employment, and also considering their strengths and weaknesses.
- Assessment of communications skills improved – sometimes forgotten in traditional science-based curricula.
- Students felt they could display their full range of knowledge, skills and abilities.
- Strong support team is required to set up such assessment activities.

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