Video assessment of undergraduate midwifery students’ practice skill.

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Outline of presentation

• Overview of Midwifery in New Zealand
• Overview of Midwifery education at Otago Polytechnic
• Outline of skills learning and assessment process
• Background to the research
• Research method
• Results of the focus groups
• Recommendations
• Final summary.
New Zealand midwifery

• Midwifery in New Zealand
• Autonomy, practice scope, collaborative care.

Midwives need
– Excellent communication skills
– Technical ability in all skills to support normal birth and skills for complicated birth in collaboration with specialist
– Ability to practice independently in partnership with women over the course of normal uncomplicated childbirth
– To recognise when specialist services are required and to work alongside specialists providing individualised care to women
Midwifery at Otago Polytechnic

4 year degree
Most students completed in 3 extended years

Foundation skills in first year
Skills are consolidated, embedded and integrated over 2nd and third year

20 individual skills taught and assessed
Foundation skills for midwifery practice: 20 individual first year skills
Blend of online and face to face

Moodle
Course content

Online tuts
AdobeConnect

Whole class intensive week long blocks X 4 per year
Small weekly group tutorials (ākonga)

This is where each individual skill is learned.

Face to face with a lecturer
Assessment of first year students’ skill competence

Formal examination (OSCE) or Assessment at a distance?
Rationale for research

• Anecdotal feedback from students and staff was mixed
• Deeper understanding was required

• 2014 and 2015 survey research.
  – Students provided information about their experience of VAMPS (McIntosh, Patterson & Miller 2018)

• 2018 qualitative, content analysis, research exploring staff experience of VAMPS.
  – Data collected through two focus groups

McIntosh, C., Patterson, J., Miller, S. (2018). First year midwifery students' experience with self-recorded and assessed video of selected midwifery practice skills at Otago Polytechnic in New Zealand. *Nurse education in practice* 28, 54-59
The additional benefit of accessibility afforded by video assessment is a new and unique finding for undergraduate midwifery education, and may resonate with other educators seeking ways to assess similar skill sets with cohorts of students studying at distance.
Research process

• Proposal approved by OP Ethics committee.

• Content analysis method

• Focus groups of staff involved in teaching and/or marking the VAMPS assessment

• Two focus groups, one face to face and one online
Focus group process

- Research assistant facilitated groups
- Other research assistant transcribed
- Data sent to participants for verification
- Two researchers coded and categorised anonymised data independently - then came together to confirm and agree categories and themes.
- NVivo software used to further clarify and categorise the data.
- Final overarching theme identified

“Getting it right”
“Getting it right”

- Perceived importance for students of getting the skills right.

- Staff place importance on getting teaching and marking skills right.

A lot of students have said, and they’ve said over the years, that, in hindsight, VAMPs was great. They could do the skills blindfolded; they could do them in their sleep. They’ve gone over them so many times that it’s so embedded that in Year Two they kind of laugh about it.

I value being able to stop the video and go back and check …. I haven’t actually marked the OSCEs as a marker so I don’t have a comparison, but I can imagine its an advantage to be able to go back and double-check that.
Key categories

• In order to “Get it right” there were three key categories that emerged.

These are
• Being supported
• Being prepared
• Time and space
Being supported

Support requires:

• Clear information for staff and students
• Clear scenarios, not too complicated for first year
• Students working together to complete the assessment
• Clear instructions and expectations for markers
• Good moderation process for markers

I encourage students, if they’ve got questions, to put it on the forum so that it can be sorted once and for all instead of lots of ‘people saying different things about what they’ve heard.’

I found it’s a bit problematic around the marking because there’s the rubric…. and you mark everyone according to that, but there’s a safety fail, and then you can’t give them that mark that they’ve achieved.

I had a look at the skills sheet that they would have used and I just did ‘tick, tick,’ as I was watching the skill that was happening. So doing it for the first time, I thought it was quite straightforward.
Being supported Clear instructions

Staff perceive students need:

• Clear, simple scenarios to work with
• Clear instructions about what is required for each skill
• Clear instructions on software and technology they need to use
• Markers need agreement on a clear and consistent approach to marking adhered to by all the markers.
• Markers need a moderation process which provides opportunity to ensure this consistency in marking.

But of course in akonga most weeks we are teaching a skill, and many of those skills will be a requirement of VAMPs. So I’m always saying, “New VAMPs assessment: please remember to…” or, “This will be important…”

But the instructions didn’t clearly say that; the skill sheet didn’t clearly say that. So actually, they weren’t set up well for the assessment.

instructions have probably got clearer as they have developed over the years.
Students working together can support each other and learn from each other.

It can be a challenge to arrange a time and place where they can get together.

Some students have to work on their own without the support of other students. I think they are potentially disadvantaged.

I have to say that my students used an antenatal clinic room previously for their VAMPs, and that was really easy for them.

…… And it just seemed to make it so much easier than having to sort things at home.

You’ve also got students who do really well, role-modelling good communication, how to do the skill well, with other students who may not do it so well.
Being supported

Simple scenarios

- Scenarios should be appropriate for first year students
  and assessed with expectations of first year students in
  mind.
  - Safety criteria need to be met but can trip students up,
    resulting in a fail for the assessment, leaving students feeling frustrated.

You’re trying to be really clear. Like, “If you do not put a label on the front, as small as that is, you will fail.”

I think with an OSCE, having a more complex scenario probably would work. But I think with this assessment, because of the level of pedantic observation we’re applying to it, it’s challenging.

And they don’t know what they don’t know, so they get confused.
Being prepared  
Technology preparation

• Staff feel that students are becoming more familiar with technology but there can still be a struggle for some.
• Having to consider things like camera angles can add complexity to the assessment.
• There were some older women in the group who really struggled with technology; uploading their VAMPs.
• The time it takes for them to do it, the hiccups with technology, that kind of thing.

• We’re not assessing their ability to use technology, we’re assessing their ability to do skills.
Being prepared
Formative assessment

• Formative assessment allows the student to have a practice run with the VAMPS without penalty.
• A valued aspect of the assessment for staff but it takes a lot of time.
• Staff felt they gave extra time to the marking of the formative assessment to help prepare students for the summative assessment.

You do have to do quite a thorough job of the formative process in order to inform the student enough for the summative process.

The other thing is, I really like that we do a formative process with them, because I think that’s really positive, but again it’s a lot of marking.

So I actually really like this assessment in terms of that ability, and I do value it in that way. Especially that feedback that students give us that they really get to know the skill through it. But I find it exceptionally time consuming.
Time and Space

- Time spent preparing students for the assessment
- Time spent on the formative assessment process
- Finding a suitable space for students to work
- Preparing the space for the VAMPS

I think they don’t ever seem to appreciate how long it’s going to take, no matter how often you tell them. They always get rushed at the end,

Then the other thing is if they do manage to find a room they can use, they’re in an environment where there’s potentially gonna be a lot of noise, so their filming then becomes problematic. There’s just lots of issues; lots of considerations.
Value in the VAMPS assessment and getting it right:

- Despite challenges, staff see this as a valuable learning and assessment experience for students.
- Staff see the progress students make through the effort they put into the VAMPS.

I had one student who did both: both an OSCE and VAMPS... even though she really didn’t like being videoed, she found that challenging. But she preferred it to the OSCE where they had to travel to Kapiti and do it all on one day, with all the nerves and anxiety that surrounded that.

I’ve seen some really marginal information sharing and consent on those videos, and it really made me think a lot about how I work with students in Akonga around that stuff, so that’s been a positive for me as well as ending up being positive for students. I think self-reflection around their communication is good.
Recommendations

• Simplify the scenarios as much as possible
• Keep distance students in mind when marking the VAMPS
• Pre-moderation
  – currently we have a post moderation meeting but staff felt a pre-moderation meeting to agree the parameters of marking might help with consistency in marking.
Final summary

• Staff value the VAMPS for the learning they see students achieve through participating and making sure they get the skills right
• The VAMPS assessment will benefit from further development
• There is concern about the level of scrutiny that staff give to the marking of the VAMPS assessment
• Further preparation prior to the VAMPS both for staff who are teaching and marking vamps and for students might improve overall satisfaction with the assessment.

• This type of assessment may be useful in any field where communication and technical ability needs to be assessed