



THE UNIVERSITY OF
MELBOURNE

Structured Interdisciplinary Clinical Placements Abroad Reflections on Healthcare Education

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2023

Setting the Scene: 2023

- Two-week international clinical placement
- Mae Sariang, Thailand, August & September 2023
- Challenges Abroad, Future Sense Foundation

- **Eight postgraduate UoM students**
 - 4 Doctor of Optometry
 - 4 Master of Clinical Audiology

- **Two UoM academic supervisors**
 - Optometrist, Optometry and Vision Sciences
 - Audiologist, Audiology and Speech Pathology



Activities



Clinical Screenings

- Hearing Screenings
- Vision Screenings



Clinical Record Development

- Data Entry Forms
- Patient History Forms
- Patient Handout Forms

Educational Workshops

- Key hearing care and eye care messages for community



Interdisciplinary Learning

- Stepwise model of interdisciplinary clinical placement



Interdisciplinary Program Structure



Acclimatisation

Familiarisation

Practise

Implementation

Reflection

= Global Interdisciplinary Clinical Immersion (GICI)

Acclimatisation

- **Climate & Environment**
- **Language & Culture**
- **Clinical resources**
- **Management availability**
- **Referral pathways**



Acclimatisation

“It was a lot of adapting and being flexible... The thing was to just keep going with what you have available, ask for help and doing your best was the most important part.”

“The clinical environment was very different in Thailand compared to back home. Initially I found it challenging to adjust my clinical decision making so to better reflect the availability of resources in Mae Sariang.”

Acclimatisation

Familiarisation

Practise

Implementation

Reflection



Familiarisation

- Discipline-specific terms
- Discipline-specific techniques
 - Data entry
- Results and interpretation



Familiarisation

“We taught each other logic and the fundamentals ... which really expanded my understanding of ... how hearing/vision problems can affect a patient”

“At the beginning ... [I had] no understanding of what [the results] meant... I am now in a better position to record Audiology data and make some basic interpretations.”

Acclimatisation

Familiarisation

Practise

Implementation

Reflection



Practise

Examiner

Patient

Teacher

Learner

Acclimatisation

Familiarisation

Practise

Implementation

Reflection



Practise

“It [was] a valuable insight to take part in the testing where I could as it's not something I'm likely to get a chance to do anywhere else.”

“I found it useful to have an audiology test myself as this allowed a better understanding of the patient experience.”

Acclimatisation

Familiarisation

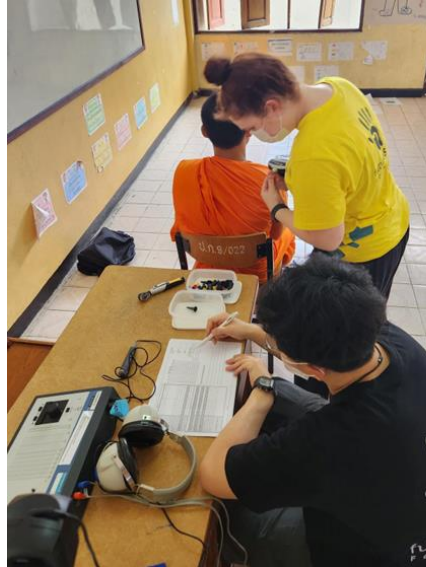
Practise

Implementation

Reflection



Implementation



Aud examiner
+
Optom assistant

Optom examiner
+
Aud assistant

Implementation

“There was lots to learn... especially non-verbal communication [and] the importance of body language and non-verbal cues.”

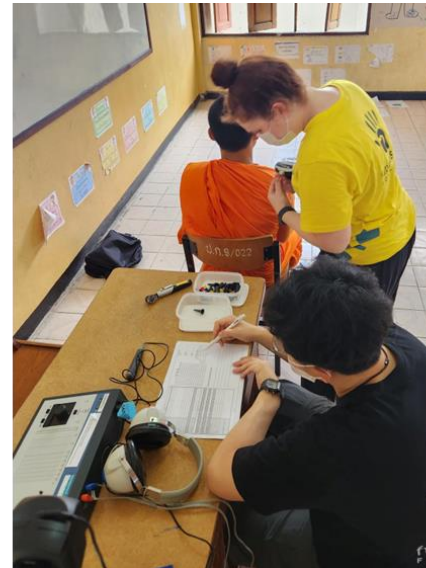
Acclimatisation

Familiarisation

Practise

Implementation

Reflection



Reflection

- **Weekly reflections**
- **End of placement survey**
- **Focus group (1 year later)**

Acclimatisation

Familiarisation

Practise

Implementation

Reflection



Reflection

“I learnt ... the importance of interdisciplinary care for a patient ... a patient may have other coexisting health problems that affect their life, which might stay undiscovered if you don't offer them the option to check with other health professionals.”

“This was SO COOL and I wish we had've done more of it!!”

Acclimatisation

Familiarisation

Practise

Implementation

Reflection



Focus Group Reflections – One Year Later



Interdisciplinary activities

Attitudes towards other students

Interdisciplinary comparisons

Interdisciplinary learnings

Translation into clinical practice

Focus Group Reflections



Suggestions for improvement

Connect students in advance (current and previous trips)

Set interdisciplinary expectations before trip

Teach interdisciplinary content before leaving

More practice activities to help communicate with community

Build on resources from previous years rather than starting from scratch



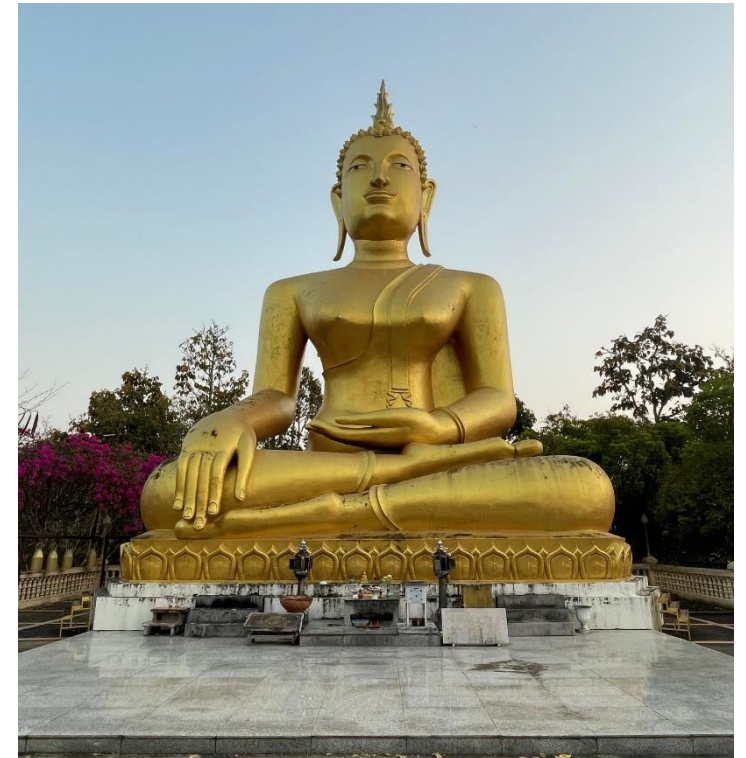
2025

Setting the Scene: 2025

- Two-week international clinical placement
- Mae Sariang, Thailand, February 2025
- Challenges Abroad, Future Sense Foundation

- **Twelve postgraduate UoM students**
 - 5 Doctor of Optometry
 - 4 Master of Clinical Audiology
 - 3 Master of Speech Pathology

- **Three UoM academic supervisors**
 - Optometrist, Optometry and Vision Sciences
 - Audiologist, Audiology and Speech Pathology
 - Speech Pathologist, Audiology and Speech Pathology



2025 Placement



Changes:

- **3 disciplines instead of two (speech pathology, first time Thailand)**

Implementations from feedback:

- **Connect students in advance**
- **Teach interdisciplinary content**
- **More practice activities**
- **Shared resources from previous years**

Other changes

- **Increased reflection frequency**
- **Broader clinical locations/experiences**

Activities

Clinical Screenings

- Hearing Screenings
- Vision Screenings
- **Oral Screenings**

Clinical Record Development

- Data Entry Forms
- Patient History Forms
- Patient Handout Forms

Educational Workshops

- Key hearing care and eye care messages for community
- **Delivered collaboratively**

Interdisciplinary Learning

- Stepwise model of interdisciplinary clinical placement
- **Model adapted for three disciplines and time constraints**



Global Interdisciplinary Clinical Immersion: 2025





Thank you



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References



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