



## Background

Peer learning is well recognised to promote skills such as team working, reflection and identification of learning needs (Boud, Cohen and Sampson 1999). For our professional practice classes we introduced student triplet counselling skills practise where groups of three students learn from others' performance and a facilitated feedback discussion.

## Design

Students completed a questionnaire about their views of counselling triplets after their first experience. Questionnaire responses were entered into SPSS for analysis which consisted frequency counts with percentages and open questions were analysed thematically.

## Results

60 year 1 and 81 year 2 students completed the questionnaire (39% response), 70% (n=98) were female. Almost all students (99%, n=193) agreed that developing their communication skills was essential to their future practice. Despite one third of students (**36%, n=50**) reported concern about demonstrating their communication skills in front of peers, most (**77% n=108**) reported being comfortable discussing their skills with peers. Sharing feedback with peers was report to benefit their learning by **91% (n=128)** of students with a similar number (**86%, n=124**) reporting that working in this way improved their communication skills. New ideas about communication skills and building confidence were identified as the key benefits in the open questions, although some did report that they felt pressure to do well in their consultations and were concerned about how the others might react to the feedback they gave.

## Discussion

Students reported clear benefits to their learning in working with peers, despite some concerns about practising in front of other students. Whilst the comparatively low response rate means it is unknown whether this reflects the views of the wider student body, the positive response to the initiative meant that we retained this for our students across all years of professional practice teaching.

*You can learn and reflect on how to improve using your mistakes and other peoples mistakes as well*  
Respondent 136

*feel the need to do more pre-work as I don't want to embarrass myself in front of my peers*  
Respondent 159

## Comments and observations

*Sometimes it is hard to give feedback to peers as you don't know how they will take it*  
Respondent 1



## References

Boud, D., Cohen, R. and Sampson, J. (1999) Peer learning and assessment. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education* 24 (4), 413-426