Supervising clinicians from diverse language and cultural backgrounds

Session outline

- Orientation: identifying challenges; language issues

- Cultural competence in the training relationship

- Building skills

Part 1. Discussion

- What are the potential challenges for internationally-trained doctors practising in the NHS?

- What are the challenges for their educators?

IMG voices

Watch the video.

How many of the challenges mentioned were you aware of?

Which were new?

Podcast : Culture and concepts of professionalism

: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFBtakvl8yA

Challenges for IMGs

Language and Communication:

- Encounters with patients, relatives and colleagues:
- Roles, expectations, communication styles, professional models

Cultural factors:

- Concepts of professionalism
- Systems, protocols, ethics
- Professional relationships, teamwork
- Teaching and Learning

Pilotto et al, 2007

What do we mean by 'Language'?

- Linguistic resource: grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation etc

- Sociolinguistic style ('manner'): pace, intonation, directness, body language etc

- Applied language (models of communication): consultation skills, handover, meeting skills etc

Language and relationships

- Language is not just a set of forms, but a social construct

- Communication has both a **content** and a **relationship** dimension ('not just what you say, but the way you say it')

- Rapport can be built or damaged through discourse
  (Spencer-Oatey 2005)

Language 'transfer'

- Content and 'style' of communication depend on implicit language and cultural norms

- These sociolinguistic norms differ between speech communities and even regional varieties of a language

- Language patterns are often unconsciously transferred from L1 to L2*

- Minor grammatical/pronunciation errors often go unnoticed if overall meaning is clear

- Sociolinguistic features can be more difficult to change and any 'mistakes' are often more harshly judged (Woolfson 2002)

*L1 = native language, L2 = second language

Communicative Competence

Defined as

'Knowing **what** to say, **to whom**, in **what circumstances**, and **how** to say it' (Hymes 1972)

Concept of **'Linguistic Capital'** (Bordieu)- the ability to use language in a way that gains credibility and acceptance within a social or professional group

Interpreting attitude

- How do you recognise politeness? empathy? interest?

- What about boredom? anger? embarrassment?

- What assumptions are we making?

- How similar are these signals across cultures?

What do we mean by culture?

Either alone (or in groups), write a short definition

Some other definitions

- 'The collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another' (Hofstede)

- 'Primarily a system for creating, sending, storing and processing information' (Hall and Hall)

- 'The man-made part of the human environment' (Herskovits)

- 'an integrated pattern of learned beliefs and behaviours that can be shared among groups… that shapes how we explain and value our world, and provides us with the lens through which we find meaning' (Bettancourt)

- 'The way we do things round here'

Culture as an iceberg: discuss

Culture as an iceberg

- **Behaviours and symbols** are the visible manifestations of culture
- **Rituals** (pattens of interacting; use of language) are less immediately obvious, but can be observed
- **Values** that drive these are deeply held, seldom directly stated, often out of awareness of those who hold them
- **Cultural meaning** cannot be directly observed by outsiders and is therefore difficult to interpret
- **(**Hofstede 2010**)**

Culture is learned, not inherited

- Patterns of thinking, feeling and socially acceptable behaviour begin to be acquired in early childhood
- Influence of early socialization is most stable and resistant to change (Hall 1997)
- Social, educational and professional environments extend and modify cultural practices

Reflecting on your cultural values

- What deeper, shared values do these typically 'British' behaviours illustrate?

- queuing

- making small talk about the weather

- interaction with fellow travellers

Answers: Strong sense of fair play; aversion to overt confrontation; reservedness/privacy

Reflect: How easy would you find it to

push in to the front at the bus stop?

- ask a colleague for their political views?

- strike up a conversation with a stranger on the train?

Communication: Intent and effect
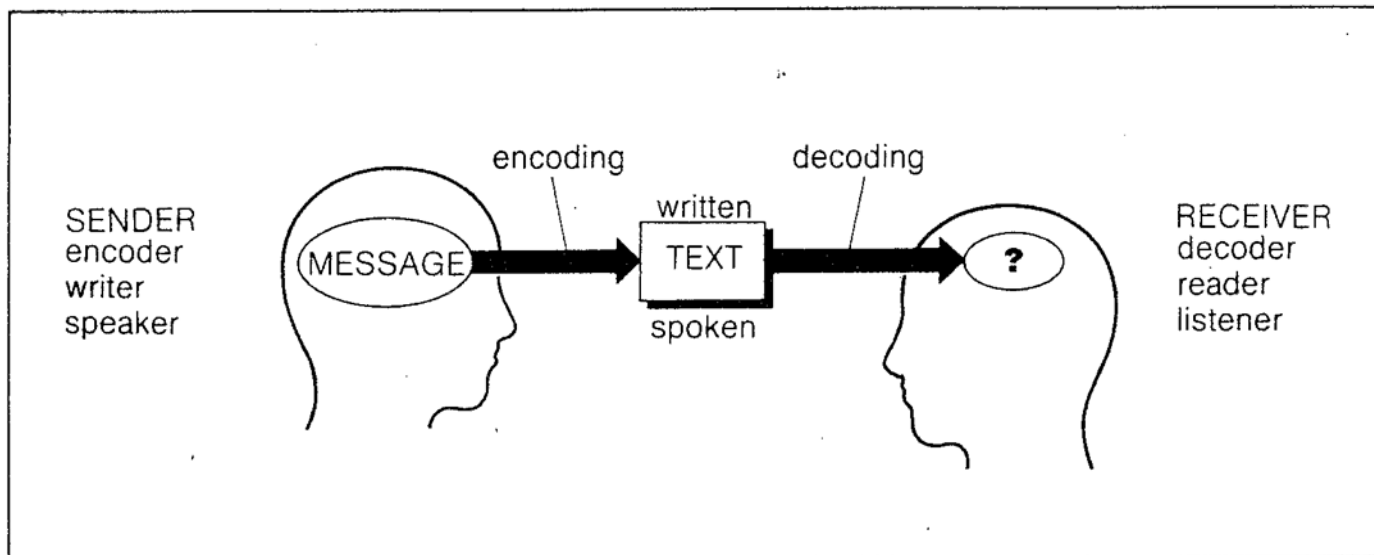
Communication: intent v effect

- Receiver filters message through own sociolinguistic/cultural expectations and assumptions

- Our own culture limits 'the predictions we make about how strangers might respond' (Gudykunst & Kim)

- Ethnocentric position: cause of misunderstanding may be negatively perceived as 'language barrier'/behavioural/attitude issues/'poor' communication skills

- Ethnorelative position: reflecting on our own implicit expectations; seeking to understand behavior in cultural context (Bennett 1993)

Cultural values can impact on:

- formality of interaction (setting, dress, language)

- expectations around autonomy, direction and influence

- willingness to question; how to show/interpret initiative

- self-disclosure and boundaries (socialising)

- giving and receiving feedback (issues of face and transparency; setting - public or private?; directness/hedging; specific/general comments)

Reflecting on assumptions

- Discuss the vignettes (see notes) in small groups

- Share examples from your own experience

Part 3. Building skills

- The role of trust in the training relationship
- Negotiating the learning contract
- Precision feedback

Building Trust

- Evidence of powerful benefits from trusting relationships with supervisors

- **Cognition-based trust** is 'confidence built on perceptions of the other's reliability and competence'

- **Affect-based trust** is defined as 'trust that involves concern for the other, and comfort in opening up to them' and is based on empathy and care

- Both kinds of trust may be more difficult to develop in intercultural relationships

Woolf 2017; McAllister 1995; Chua et al 2011; Rockstuhl and Ng, 2008

Negotiating the learning contract

- IMGs' educational experiences may be very different from UK graduates'
- Key concepts may be new or differently understood (self-directed learning, questioning, feedback)
- 'Insight' may be a cultural construct in itself
- Behaviours may be misinterpreted on both sides
- Need to clarify expectations, approaches and roles

Communication feedback

- Most L2 speakers welcome feedback on communication

- Need for nuanced analysis of trainees' talk and interaction – not just 'improve English' or 'develop communication skills'

- Use more precise terms for nuanced feedback

- Monitor own speech to facilitate clearer conversations

Mind your language

Why might these be difficult for an L2 speaker to interpret?

- 'This is a barn-door case of meningitis'
- 'You will have protected time for self-study'
- 'It is important to discover the patient's agenda'
- 'He is a single-handed GP'
- 'They thought he'd turned the corner, but then they lost him'
- 'Something came up so we'll have to put it off'
- 'I'm afraid that might be a bit tricky'

Monitor your own speech

Avoid or explain:

- Idioms ('hit the roof', 'let's park that one')
- Colloquialisms
- Institutionalised phrasing ('evidenced-based treatment pathway')
- Abbreviations/acronyms
- Excessive hedging ('That's an interesting way of looking at it')
- Phrasal verbs (put off/put out/put up/put up with/put by)
- Cultural references ('Jekyll and Hyde character')

Language: terms for precision feedback

- **Fluency** – ability to speak spontaneously, at 'normal' speed without obvious hesitation

- **Accuracy** - 'correct' grammar and appropriate vocabulary choice for context

- **Pronunciation** – speech is easily understood, pace and rhythm do not 'strain' the listener

- **Intonation** (the 'melody' of English) - attitude is effectively conveyed

- **Participation** – contributions are appropriate in length and relevance, turn-taking is balanced

- **Delivery** – points are organised and clearly developed

Resources

- Pilotto et al, (2002) *Issues for clinicians training international medical graduates: a systematic review (MJA Vol 187 Number 4)*

- HEE London & SE PSU, (2015) *Framework for Supporting Safe Transition for IEHPs*

- AFMC, *Faculty development program for Teachers of IEHPs*: http://www.afmc.ca/img/default_en.htm

- Theories of culture: www.hofstede.com

- Gudykunst, W and Kim, Y. (2002) *Communicating with Strangers: An approach to Intercultural Communications* (4th Edition) New York: McGraw-Hill

- Hall, Edward T. (1997) *The Silent Language*, New York: Anchor Books

- Spencer Oatey, H. (2005). *Rapport Management Theory and Culture*

- Rustecki et al, (2008) *Assessing the Communicative Competence of EU GPs Applying to Work in London* Education for Primary Care Vol 22