

***“Since light travels faster than***

***sound, people appear bright until***

***you hear them speak...”***

# Oral Exams Pro's and Con's

Zeev Goldik



# Oral examinations

- Can generate marks unrelated to competence?

# Oral exams- pro's

- A) Mirrors the oral form of communication that dominate professional practice
- B) Can test limits of knowledge and understanding
- C) Effective way of assessing:
  1. Cognitive processes
  2. Interpersonal competence
  3. Interpersonal qualities

# Oral examinations: Pro's

- Flexibility
- Fidelity
- Testing higher order cognitive skills
- Measure aspects of clinical competence not tapped in written examinations

# Oral examinations: Con's

- Resource intensive
- Making judgements on the basis of limited evidence
- In case of appeal: justifying marks without written evidence
- Difficult to distinguish between what a candidate says and how they say it
- Performance inhibiting stress
- Poor agreement between examiners

# Oral examinations: Con's

- Expensive
- Complex logistics
- Time consuming

# Oral examinations: Con's

- Halo effect
- Observer effect
- Errors of central tendency
- Contrast
- Scores related to irrelevant attributes of candidates
- Leniency (permissiveness, lack of strictness)
- Errors of logic (mistakes)



# The “halo effect”



- An extension of an overall impression of a person (or one particular outstanding trait) to influence the total judgment of that person
- (A kind of an "angelic halo" surrounds the person)



- Opposite: the 'devil effect'

# The "Pygmalion Effect"

- People tend to live up to what's expected of them and they tend to do better when treated as if they are capable of success

Pygmalion (Greek mythology: king of Cyprus who carved and then fell in love with a statue of a woman, which Aphrodite brought to life as Galatea.

- George Bernard Shaw wrote a play, entitled Pygmalion, about **Henry Higgins** (the gentleman) and **Lisa Doolittle** (the cockney flower girl whom Henry Turns bets he can turn into a lady).

# Self Fulfilling Prophecy

William Isaac Thomas (1863-1947)

- ‘If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences.’
- Events tend to turn out as one has hypothesized, not because of some great insight but because one behaves in a manner to achieve this outcome.

# Observer effect

- It occurs when subjects alter their behavior because an observer is present



# Central tendency error

- Tendency of examiners to rate all or most of the examinees as average.

# Contrast

- Judgments of a candidate are influenced by impressions of preceding candidates

# Score related to irrelevant attributes

- Appearance
- Confidence
- Anxiety

# Examiners

- Carefully selected
- Trained
- Monitored



# Strategies in planning vivas

- Spend a few moments initially putting a candidate at ease
- Introduce each topic and define its area
- Go to the core of the question quickly
- Avoid unmarkable questions

# Strategies in planning vivas

- A slow candidate may be encouraged with specific questions
- When you feel you can award a grade to a topic, finish
- When the bell goes, let candidate finish his or her sentence

O Outstanding	A very rare candidate. Uniformly outstanding. Well read, coherent, rational, consistent, critical. Without being asked, justifies approaches, etc, by reference to published work.
E Excellent	Extremely impressive candidate. Generally outstanding candidate but not so uniformly well informed.
G Good	Generally impressive candidate. Well informed, coherent policies, fairly critical. Good decision making skills. Justifies majority of approaches well.
S Satisfactory	A candidate characterised by a reassuring solidness rather than impressiveness. Able to justify only some approaches well, but most appear sensible. Adequate, not good decision making skills.
B Bare pass	Examiner is only just comfortable with candidate's adequacy. Not much justification of approaches, but important ones are sensible. Decision making and other skills tested are just, on balance, acceptable.
N Not very good	Questionable approaches, sometimes neither justifiable nor justified. Examiner is uncomfortable with candidate and his or her decision making skills, thinking him or her to be possibly risky in practice. Seems not to be good at applying basic knowledge.
U Unsatisfactory	Approaches are often inconsistent and rarely justified. Candidate does not seem to be capable of passing the examination overall. Poor at applying knowledge.
P Poor	Candidate clearly not passable, though slight evidence of ability. Generally incoherent approach to practice. No justification for specific approaches.
D Dangerous	Candidate is worse than poor. Adopts such arbitrary approaches as to put patients at risk.



# Reliabilities across methods

Testing Time in Hours	MCQ <sup>1</sup>	Case-Based Short Essay <sup>2</sup>	PMP <sup>1</sup>	Oral Exam <sup>3</sup>	Long Case <sup>4</sup>	OSCE <sup>5</sup>
1	0.62	0.68	0.36	0.50	0.60	0.47
2	0.76	0.73	0.53	0.69	0.75	0.64
4	0.93	0.84	0.69	0.82	0.86	0.78
8	0.93	0.82	0.82	0.90	0.90	0.88

<sup>1</sup>Norcini et al., 1985

<sup>2</sup>Stalenhoef-Halling et al., 1990

<sup>3</sup>Swanson, 1987

<sup>4</sup>Wass et al., 2001

<sup>5</sup>Petrusa, 2002



## Reliability oral examination (Swanson, 1987)

Testing Time in Hours	Number of Cases	Same Examiner for All Cases	New Examiner for Each Case	Two New Examiners for Each Case
1	2	0.31	0.50	0.61
2	4	0.47	0.69	0.76
4	8	0.47	0.82	0.86
8	12	0.48	0.90	0.93

# Marking system

- 2+ Exceptionally good
- 2 pass
- 1+ narrow fail
- 1 bad fail

# Marking system

- 2, 2, 2, 2 (or better) **pass**
- 2, 2, 1+, 1+ **fail**
- 2, 2, 2, 1+ **pass**
- 2, 2, 2, 1 (or worse) **fail**

# Examiners

- Hawks and Doves
- Stringent and lenient
- Candidate centered and patient centered



# Candidate centered

- Their sympathy are primarily with the candidates, of whom they wish to pass as many as possible

# Patient centered

- Their primary aim is to maintain clinical standards at a high level so the patients are protected and provided with competent doctors

# Examiners specificity

- A candidate's marks depending on the particular examiner (s) they happen to see

# Case specificity

- Because candidates are not equally proficient at all clinical tasks they have areas of weakness and strength, and hence can get lucky or unlucky in the particular cases they happen to see, sometime seeing cases with which they are familiar and other times seeing cases with which, for a host of reasons, they are unfamiliar.

# Candidate's performance

- Candidate ability
- Test difficulty
- Examiner stringency
- Marking scale

# Examiner's marks

- 8% Clear fail
- 27% Fail
- 40% Pass
- 25% Clear Pass

# Marks

- 87% of systematic variance- difference in candidates
- 12% differences in examiners
- 1% Station type

I see Professor Sanderson is as hawkish as ever....





# Examiner's Gender Difference

- None

# “Doves” and “Hawks”

## Step One

- Identify potential extreme examiners:
  - All examiners whose average score for a station was more than three standard deviations above (**potential dove**) or below (**potential hawk**) the average score for all remaining examiners
  - (33) out of 2182
  - Catching the Hawks and Doves: A Method for Identifying Extreme Examiners on Objective Structured Clinical Examinations” – July 20<sup>th</sup> 2011

# Doves” and “Hawks”

## Step Two

- Identifying distribution of ratings from extreme examiners compared with distribution for all examiners
- Determine whether the examiner demonstrated adequate variability in their candidate ratings for a given station
- (17) (16 eliminated)

# Doves” and “Hawks”

## Step Three: Cohort criterion

- Determine whether the candidate cohort seen by the examiners in question demonstrated adequate variability
- From 17 only 7 remained (7)
- 7 out of 2182

# Effect of training

- “All assessments that depend on human raters are vulnerable to mischief due to raters
- Some studies have found null or even negative effects of training
- - Bernardin, HJ, & Buckley, MR. Strategies in rater training. *Academy of Management* 1981; 6: 205-222.

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# The language problem

- The slow candidate
- Crucial?
- Translate?
- Be telegraphic!

## EUROPEAN DIPLOMA IN ANAESTHESIOLOGY AND INTENSIVE CARE

### Guidelines for EDA Part II Hosts

#### 1. **ESA MEMBERSHIP**

EDA Part II hosts must be members of the Society.

## 2. LOCAL ARRANGEMENTS

Premises. The examination is preferably held in one room large enough to accommodate 5 to 9 tables depending on the number of candidates. Tables should be large enough to accommodate two examiners and one candidate and be sufficiently spaced out so that no one is disturbed by the surrounding conversations. The following rooms are also needed: a study room and two waiting rooms for candidates, a separate coffee/lunch room for examiners (if possible) as well as the usual facilities.

Equipment. One laptop computer is needed per table in order to show the digital X-rays to the candidates. The Examination Administrator will ask the examiners whether they can bring their own laptops; if the required number of computers is not reached this way, the host should be ready to provide a few laptops. If need be, the Examination Administrator can bring up to two laptops from the ESA offices if he is travelling with a colleague, and one only if coming on his own. Electrical adaptors should be foreseen by the host if applicable. The host will make sure that there is a power point close to each examination table. Paper and pens are needed in the Study Room and in the Examination Hall, and will be provided by the host on the day(s) of the examination (please foresee about 500 A4 sheets per day).



Candidate information. At an early stage, the Examination Office needs to be provided with appropriate information regarding the precise examination venue, details of access (air, train or road) and details of the local tourist office for candidates to contact to book accommodation. The Office then sends this information to candidates well in advance of the examination. It is helpful to candidates if adequate signposting is available within the building to guide them to where the examination is being held.

Examiners Meeting. The examiners meet prior to the examination for an Examiners Meeting at which the Guided Questions etc. can be discussed. This meeting is usually held on the evening before the first day of examination. Sometimes, the Examiners Meeting is held first thing in the morning before the first day of examination starts. This meeting is usually held in the examinations hall.

Catering. Tea, Coffee and lunch are provided for the candidates and the examiners, the cost of which should be claimed as expenses from the Examination Administrator. At the end of each day, the candidate is given a pass or fail letter and is invited to join the examiners for a glass of wine. The expected budget for catering is max. 30 Euro per capita and per day all included (coffee breaks, lunch and toast).

### 3. EXAMINERS' ACCOMMODATION AND DINNERS

Hotel. Examiners receive their accommodation and travel expenses. Accommodation should be arranged in a medium class hotel - where possible within walking distance from the examination rooms. As a guideline, the cost for a single room should not exceed 120 Euro / night (preferably including breakfast). If possible, a group price should be negotiated. The accommodation may be provisionally booked for 16 people.

Dinners. Examination hosts are also asked to arrange a dinner on the evening preceding the first day of examination and, in case of a two-day examination, on the evening of the first day of examination as well. As a guideline, a per capita charge for a meal, inclusive of wine, is 50 Euro. Control of expenditure is, perhaps, best achieved by arranging for a limited choice or set menu rather than offering an à la carte menu and wines are, perhaps, best pre-ordered according to the number of dinners.

Booking. When the examiner has confirmed his attendance to the exam, the Examination Administrator will send him/her a booking form for the hotel and dinner(s). The examiner will send this information directly to the host or to the Examination Administrator who will do the booking.

## 4. ADDITIONAL EXPENSES

Any essential expenses incurred by the host and that are related to the examination should be submitted to the Examinations office for approval before the examination. Please note that tasks performed by anaesthetists are considered voluntary in the interest of the ESA.

Secretaries and local staff. If secretaries or local staff helping the ESA staff during the examination require payment for their support, payment will be made as follows:

- 150 euros for a 1-day examination
- 250 euros for a 2-day examination.

Tasks that might be performed before and/or after the examination, and these are considered to be remunerated with the above-mentioned amounts.

## ► Part II (Oral)

Applications for the 2013 [Part II examinations](#) are closed.

Venues	Languages	Dates	Days
Porto, Portugal	English only	16-17 February 2013	Sat-Sun
Göttingen, Germany	English, German	02-03 March 2013	Sat-Sun
Barcelona, Spain	English, Spanish, French	23-24 March 2013	Sat-Sun
Madrid, Spain	English, Spanish	13-14 April 2013	Sat-Sun
Zürich, Switzerland	English, German	26-27 April 2013	Fri- Sat
London, UK	English only	18-19 May 2013	Sat-Sun
Uppsala, Sweden	English, Scandinavian	18-19 June 2013	Tue-Wed
Vienna, Austria	English, German	07-08 September 2013	Sat-Sun
Athens, Greece	English only	13-14 September 2013	Fri- Sat
Erlangen, Germany	English, German	04-05 October 2013	Fri-Sat
Istanbul, Turkey	English only	09-10 November 2013	Sat-Sun

# Future

- Video conference?

Thanks