

Focusing on **ABILITY** beyond **DISABILITY**: Experiential learning from persons with disability

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Background

- Queen's University: Patients as mentor
- Fostering empathy in Occupational Therapy students in essential for client-centred care

Developing empathy as a foundation of client-centred practice:
Evaluation of a university curriculum initiative

doi:10.2182/cjot.05.0008. This paper was published in the CJOT Early Electronic Edition, August, 2005.

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Key words

▪ Education, occupational therapy ▪ Empathy ▪ Disabled

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US.



- Translate and tailored for the Singaporean education and social context
- A more equalised and reciprocal power relationship between healthcare professionals and persons with disabilities
- *“It’s more than the ramp”*

Recruitment

- Partnering with NGOs
- Interview of potential participants

Criteria to be a Community Teacher

- Ability to communicate
- Willingness to share
- Ability to see beyond disability
- Pilot with group with physical disability



Experiential Meet-ups

- Three students pair up with a community teacher
- Preparation class (with lecturer with disability)
- Students arrange three meet-ups over course of eight weeks
- Can meet at home, workplace, recreational facility or public transport
- Token of honorarium



Range of activities that took places

Productivity

- Working in office
- Travelling on public transport

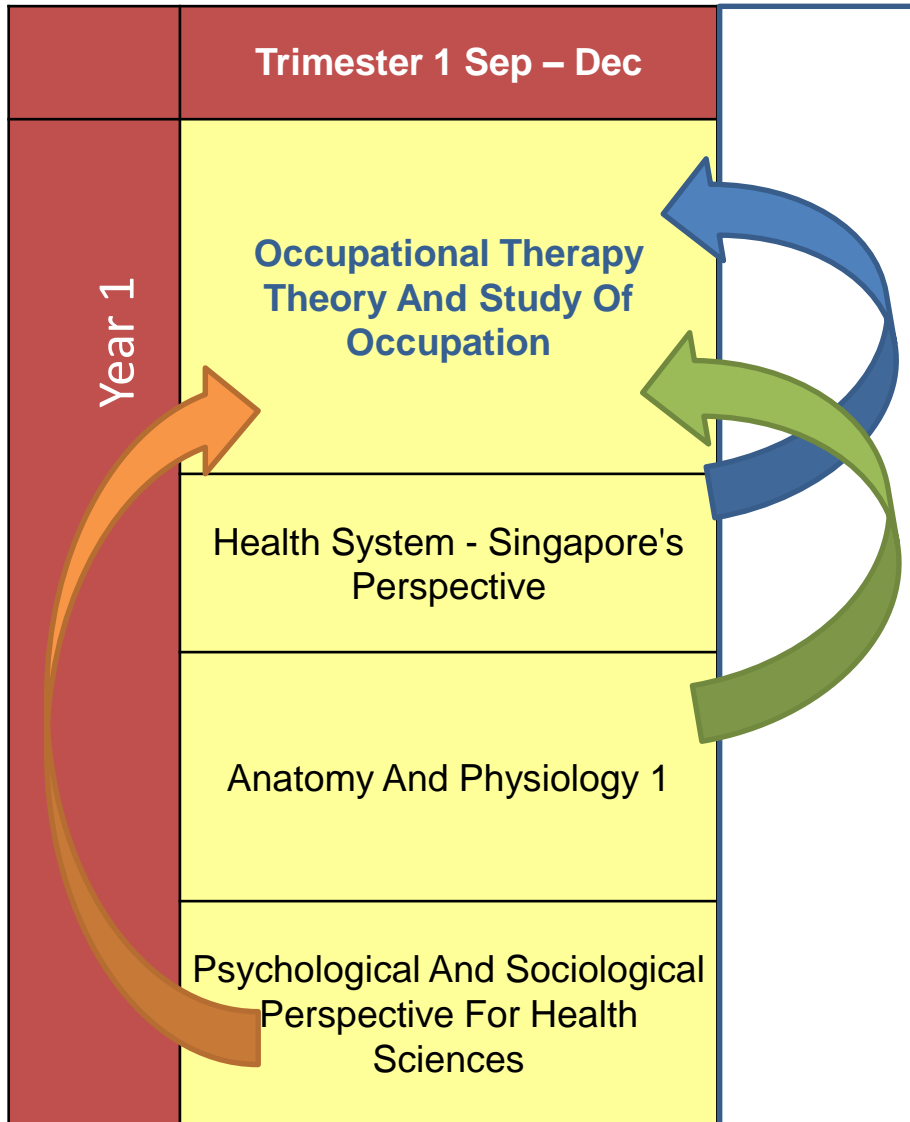
Leisure

- Bowling
- Wheelchair basketball
- Fishing

Self care

- House-work
- Cooking
- Nail cutting

Horizontal alignment and Project based



Research Questions



1. To investigate what the experiential learning experience will be when PWDs are engaged to work with students in the community.
2. To understand how students' attitudes towards disability change as a result of the experience.
3. To uncover if students demonstrate increased empathy and a more holistic understanding of disability.

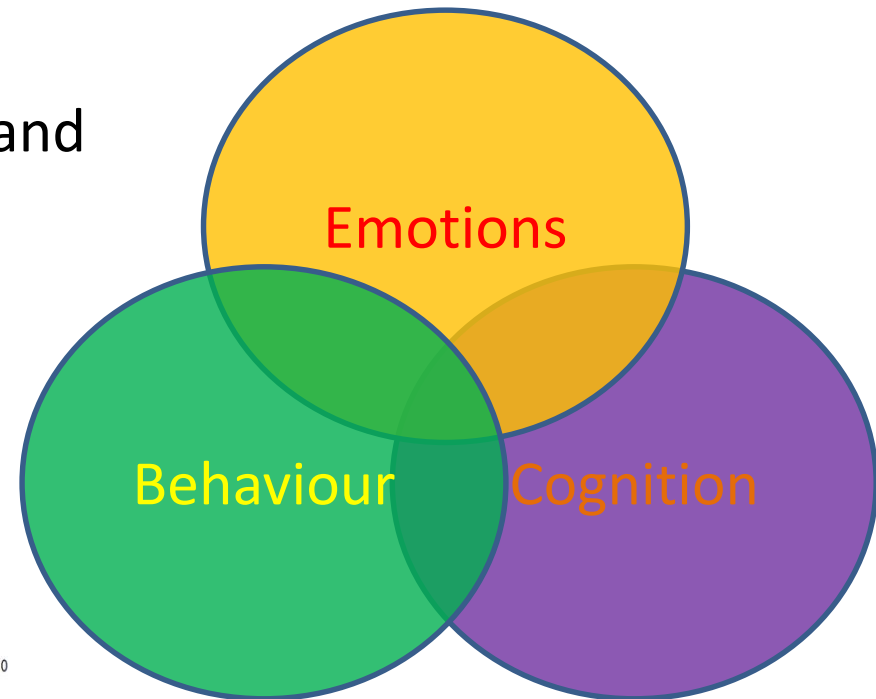
Research Design



- Mixed methods
- Quantitative: pre-test and post-test to measure attitude change
- Qualitative focus groups
- Thematic analysis to identify themes that explain the attitudinal shifts

Multi-dimensional Attitudes Scale towards Persons with Disabilities (MAS)

MAS measures feelings, behavior, and thinking towards Persons with Disabilities



Gender and Attitudes Toward People Using Wheelchairs: A Multidimensional Perspective

Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin
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<http://rcb.sagepub.com>



Noa Vilchinsky,¹ Shirli Werner,² and Liora Findler¹

Abstract

This study aims to investigate the effect of observer's gender and target's gender on attitudes toward people who use wheelchairs due to a physical disability. Four hundred four Jewish Israeli students without disabilities completed the *Multi-dimensional Attitudes Scale Toward Persons With Disabilities (MAS)*. Initially, confirmatory factor analysis was used to revalidate the MAS. Five factors emerged: Emotions, Behaviour, Cognition, Attitudes toward People with Disabilities, and Attitudes toward People with Disabilities.

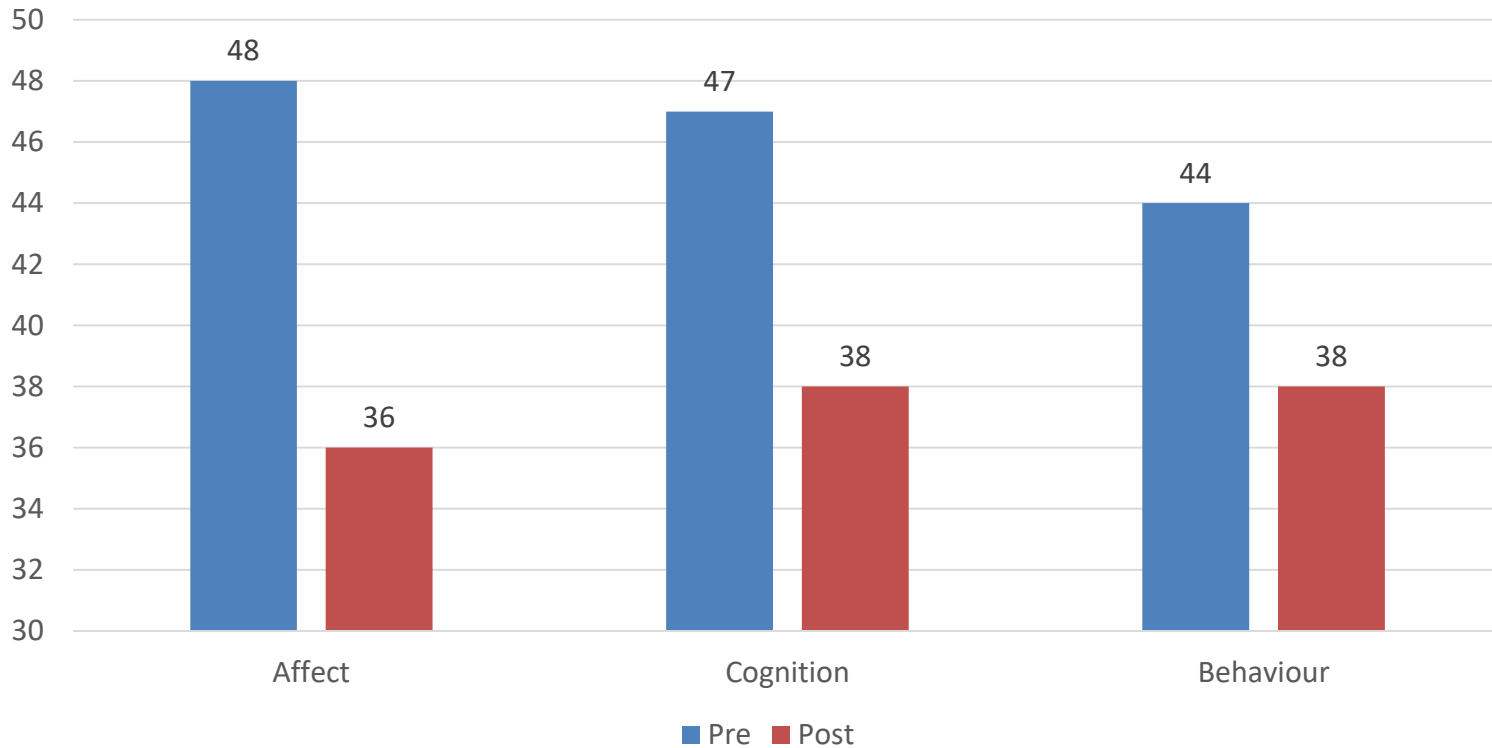
Quantitative Findings for two cohorts

1. Significant increases in all three sub-components of attitudes (Affect, Cognition, Behaviour)
2. Findings replicate over both batches of Year One students

	Participants included in analyses	Total students enrolled
AY2017 Year 1 cohort	72	79
AY2016 Year 1 cohort	51	58

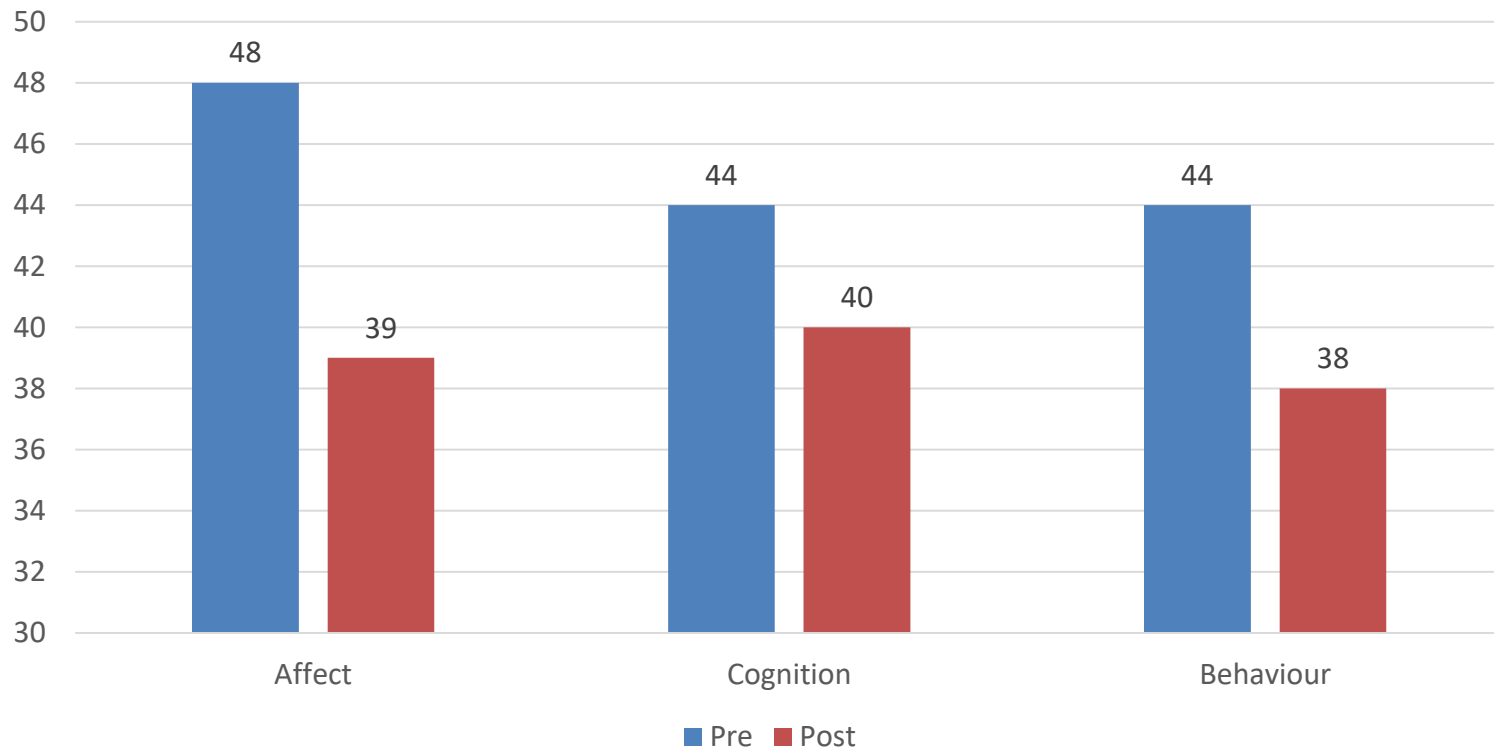
Quantitative Findings MAS AY2016 (N=51)

- Students has relatively low negative attitudes during Pre Test
- Significant reduction in negative attitudes towards Persons with Disabilities in Post test in all 3 subscales

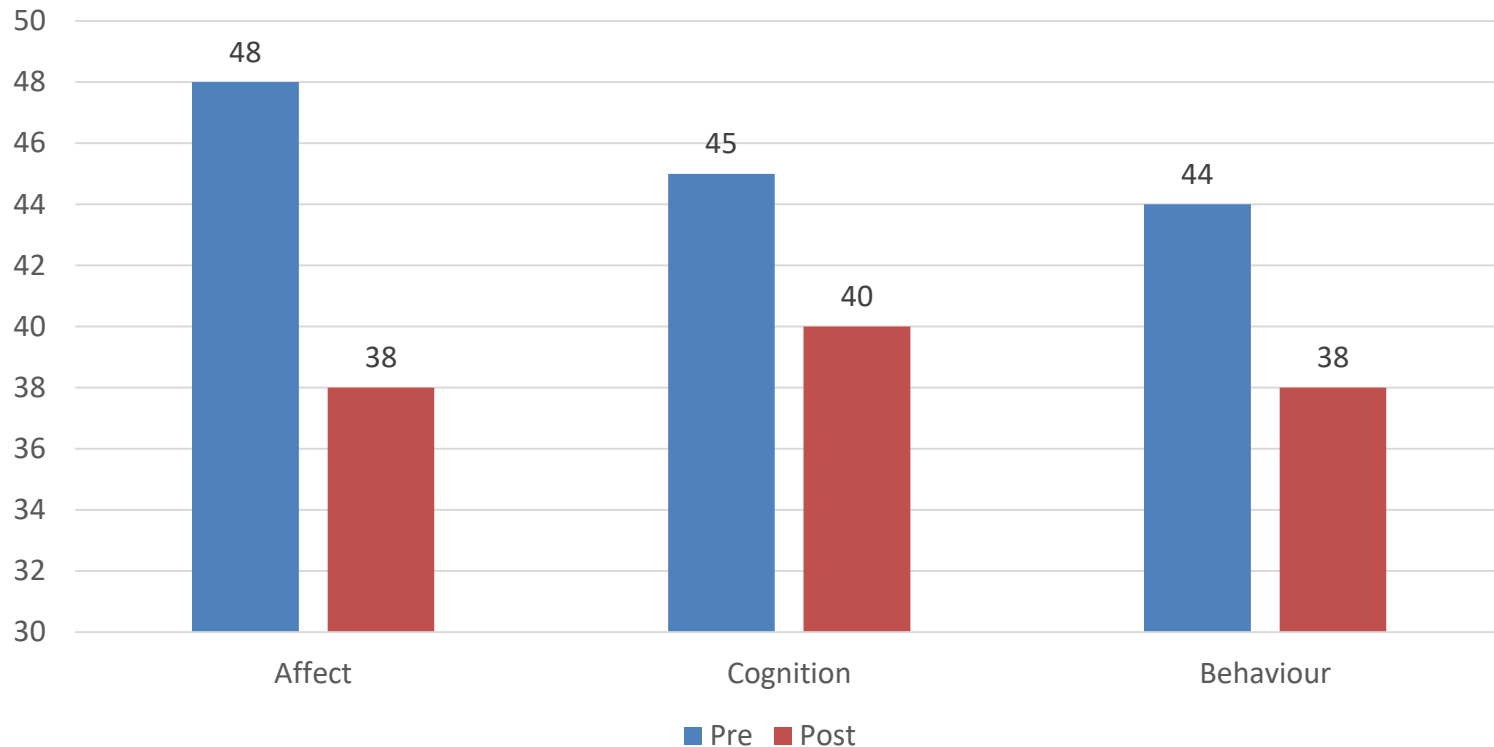


Quantitative Findings MAS AY2017 (N=72)

- Significant findings replicate in 2017 for second cohort of Year 1 students



Quantitative Findings MAS combined (2016 and 2017) (N=123)



Effect Sizes

Effect sizes range from low to high (.20 for Cognition sub-component in 2017 to to .54 for Affect sub-component in 2016)

	AY2016	AY2017
Affect	.54 (High)	.48 (Medium)
Cognition	.42 (Medium)	.23 (Low)
Behaviour	.44 (Medium)	.39 (Medium)

Qualitative Findings

- Thematic Analysis identified 4 themes that explained the attitudinal shifts

Changes in emotions

Learning specific to Occupational Therapy

Challenging and changing prior stereotypes

Personal growth

Learning specific to Occupational Therapy

Discover principles covered in classroom:

- Client-centred
- Collaboration

*“keep in mind that, like, **both of us should be involved** in the recovery process rather than, like, me dumping all my knowledge in trying to help them, and giving them as much help as possible”*

Changes in Emotions

Anxiety turned into pleasant surprises

“initially, I was actually very scared. There are some topics that are too sensitive to touch on. Like, for example, his accident.”

But, actually, during the meet-up it went very smoothly, and he was the one who initiated the entire conversation. Decided to talk about his own accident.”





Challenged Stereotypes

- Challenged previous experience e.g., nursing home visit, PWD selling tissues
- Assumption that Paralympics was easier
- Assumption on leadership positions

“But then after meeting my CT, I realised that actually, it’s achievable without someone at home, or without someone beside you when you are travelling. So, they’re actually pretty independent.”

Personal Growth

Insight and knowledge that the students can internalize to their own personal life beyond the context of disability

“So, there are things that even though we...sometimes complain: oh, I have so much work to do, I want...I want to sleep some more
I learnt to appreciate more things around me.”

“I’ve learned that, previously, I used to take a lot of things for granted. I used to wallow in self-pity about almost everything. But then, from my CT, I learned that **sometimes there are greater adversities that people face, and they can take it in their stride.**”



What our community teachers said...

- *“it's good for the... for us and the future patient or clients”*
- *“Yeah, because we have a slogan saying that, uh, don't be apart from the community. Be a part of the community, you see?”*
- *“Not because you got disability means not healthy... You can be very healthy.”*
- *“make me happy lah... make me happy. Proud, you know. Oh, at least they learn something”*

Phase Two

Phase two: trained them as standardized patients – create more employment opportunities



Actors play patients to train medical students for real-life work

They also serve as live models for anatomy lessons; some even teach students how to do physical examinations



Linette Lal

Medical schools are turning to part-time actors to help students polish their bedside manners, long before they reach a real patient's bedside.

The actors take part in elaborate role plays, simulating patients to help mimic the challenges of hospital work.

This could mean playing a distraught family member, a patient who cannot speak English or a senior doctor.

"I'm driven very much by the fact that it gives me a chance to help put the doctors' hearts into medicine," said Mr Davin Booi, who used to be a bi-part actor and is now self-employed.

The 48-year-old has been part of the National University of Singapore (NUS) Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine's programme for the past three years.

Even with acting experience, he said that working as a simulated patient can be challenging as it requires improvisation.

"As an actor, you just go by the script," he said. "As a simulated patient, you may be able to pre-empt responses, but it's not a fixed script on the other end."

Retired teacher Eugene Eu, 58, said that he likes the ability to interact with young people and a personal bonus – understand what his daughter has to deal with.

"My daughter has just started doing her nursing diploma and, with this experience that I have, I'm able to empathise with her," he said. "We have this thing in common."

NUS has around 160 such actors, while the new Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine at Nanyang Technological University (NTU) has around 100.

Apart from helping students

work on their soft skills, this group of people serve as live models for anatomy lessons. Some of them have also been trained to teach students how to carry out physical examinations, using their own bodies to demonstrate.

Dr Tanya Tierney, assistant dean of clinical communication training and student welfare at the NTU school of medicine, said the sessions make students more aware of what they say and how they say it.

"Whether you smile at the patient, whether you make eye contact, how you listen to someone – all these things can help develop trust and build rapport," she said.

Sessions are recorded on video for students to see if they have nervous tics that they are unaware of, such as clicking a pen while talking to patients.

"This is practice in a safe environment," said Dr Nicola Nigam, who directs the standardised patient programme at the NUS Centre for Healthcare Simulation.

"In the old days, students would go straight to the wards and that was not ideal. Now, patients can feel assured that their doctor has done this before."

The Singapore Institute of Technology (SIT), which offers the only degree course for occupational therapy here, is planning to start such a programme later this year – but with a different set of simulated patients.

It will pair students with people who have disabilities, who will give feedback on how well students do when it comes to technical proficiencies such as transferring them from the bed to a wheelchair.

They will also take part in role play and give students an idea of their communication skills.

Occupational therapists aim to help people live normal lives and learn to look after themselves independently.

Currently, the school is working with 21 people who have disabilities such as muscular dystrophy or cerebral palsy.

Students have to tag along with a simulated patient on three separate occasions to understand what the



Students from the SIT occupational therapy degree course (from left) Lydia Tham, 20, Cheryl Lee, 20, and Lim Jany, 21, interacting with 29-year-old Aishi Khajap, who lost a leg in a motorcycle accident four years ago and now plays wheelchair rugby. ST PHOTO: CHIA CHIA CHIA

CHANGING ROLES

Have been lectured by doctors or felt judged, or just treated as a figure in a ward. It's wonderfully satisfying to be able to help change that.



DAPHINE ONG, a professional actress, on what she hopes to achieve by working as a simulated patient.

patient's daily life is like.

Associate Professor May Lim, who is programme director for occupational therapy at SIT, said: "We decided it's very important for students to learn from the people they will be treating, through interaction in the community and beyond a clinical setting."

One of the people the students will be interacting with is Mr Aishi Khajap, 29, who lost a leg in a motorcycle accident four years ago and now plays wheelchair rugby.

He said: "For me, doing this was to create awareness of what handicapped people do. Not everyone of us stays at home all the time."

First-year student Lydia Tham,

who was paired to work with Mr Aishi along with two other classmates, said the experience really gave her pause for thought.

"When you go to know them as a person and know what they are able to achieve, you see things from their point of view – they are not just a case file."

This is what professional actress Daphine Ong hopes to achieve by working as a simulated patient.

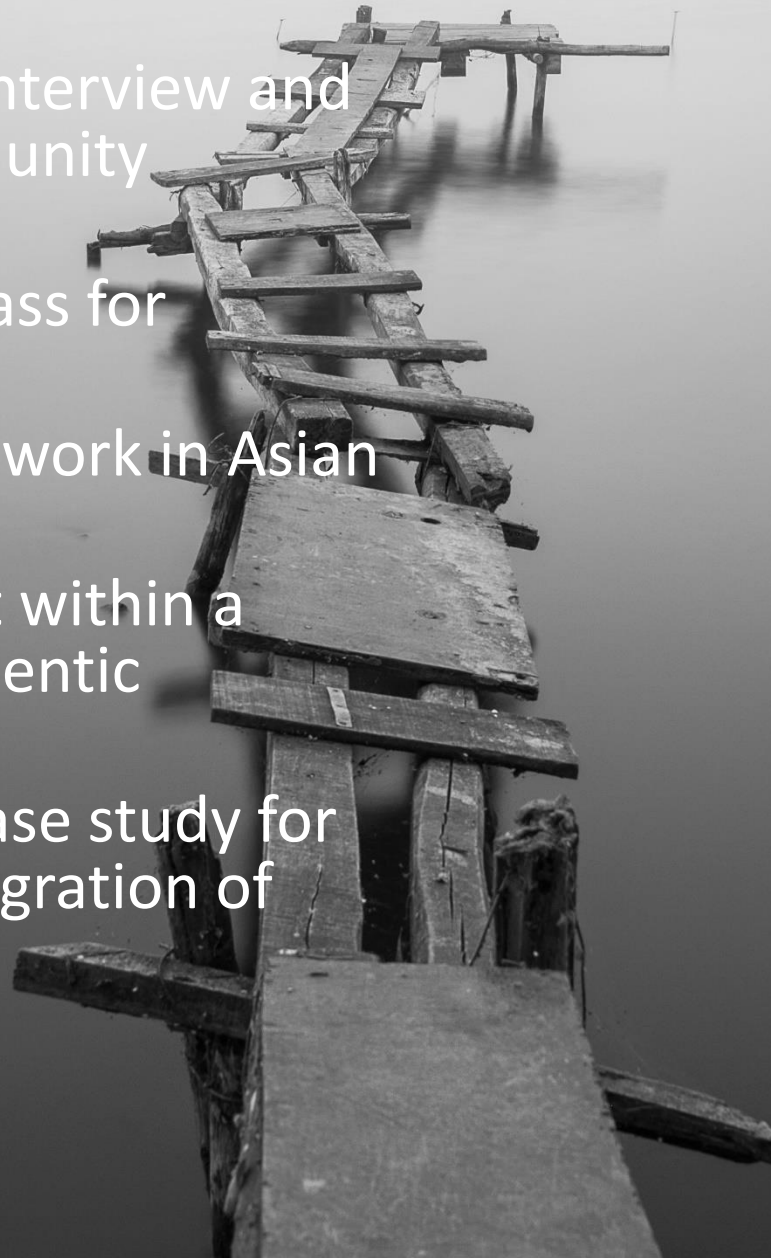
"I've been lectured by doctors or felt judged, or just treated as a figure in a ward," said the 27-year-old.

"It's wonderfully satisfying to be able to help change that."

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Learning points....

- Important to interview and prepare community teachers
- Preparation class for students
- Shown to also work in Asian context
- Embed project within a module – authentic assessment
- Use of CT as case study for horizontal integration of modules



A top-down view of a white coffee cup filled with a frothy beverage, resting on a decorative saucer with a blue and yellow floral pattern. The cup and saucer are surrounded by a circular arrangement of dried, pressed flowers and greenery. In the upper right corner, a portion of a newspaper is visible, showing the text 'OF CULTURE' and '2 21'.

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THANK YOU!