

Thames Valley Wessex Fellowship Report 2025/6

‘Structured Learning’

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Introduction

This fellowship focused on the development, delivery and evaluation of innovative educational programmes to support GP trainees across Wessex and Thames Valley. The two principal areas of work were:

- The Structured Learning Programme (SLP) for GP trainees.
- The Simulated Consultation Assessment (SCA) Integrated Training Programme (ITP) for trainees who had previously failed this exam.

The overall aim was to enhance trainee learning experiences, support educational quality, improve training capacity and develop targeted support for trainees requiring additional assistance with their final assessments. This work aligned with wider NHS ambitions to expand GP training capacity.

Background

The Structured Learning Programme (SLP) was an educational pilot designed to improve trainee engagement through interactive, collaborative learning. By incorporating case discussions, peer learning and reflective activities, the programme promoted active participation and a supportive learning environment. These programmes have been used across the country as a way to solve a number of problems –reduced capacity in GP practices, more specific and high quality learning on topic areas often poorly covered in GP training and building on an education pedagogy that has increasing evidence to build a greater depth of learning.

The First Project

Myself and several other fellows joined the team working on the SLPs across Wessex and Thames Valley right in the projects infancy and so were involved in developing and researching the modules, the logistics behind setting up and the initiation of the project. Together we evaluated the programme – before, after an initial 6 week period and following the completion of the first cohort – using qualitative and quantitative methods for both the trainees and the educators involved with the programme.

I also attended numerous sessions across the year to help facilitate the programme.

Alongside several other TVW fellows my contributions to the SLP programme included programme development:

- Contributing to the design and refinement of structured learning modules.

- Developing educational content and facilitated learning activities.
- Supporting timetable planning and programme organisation.
- Working collaboratively with educational leads and fellows across regions.

As a group of fellows for this evaluation we designed questionnaires, conducted focus groups and resident discussions, gathered feedback from trainees, facilitators and trainers, analysed the qualitative and quantitative data and produced a report summary at the end of our time supporting that programme.

Overall, the SLP pilot was viewed positively by trainees and facilitators, with evidence of increased confidence, valuable peer learning, and strong educational relevance.

However, concerns about workload, duplication of portfolio requirements, reduced clinical exposure, and facilitator capacity indicate that further refinement is needed to maximise its benefits and support sustainable wider implementation.

I felt this part of my fellowship specifically developed my educational leadership skills allowing me to improve skills in facilitating teaching, supporting the development of a programme within the post graduate team, presenting findings to stakeholders and working within a team of fellows to deliver a project.

Evolution of my fellowship...

My involvement with the SLP led to a more significant project - developing a SL based ITP for trainees who had failed their SCA exam previously. This began initially with an email to the team in the midlands who have been running such programmes for years to find out what and how they do this - and ended up in a full seven week programme - fully programmed by myself and another fellow. The evolution of this project led to a huge number of learning experiences, pushed me far beyond my comfort zone and as a result led to a great experience.

The SCA (simulated consultation assessment) ITP (integrated training post) was developed to provide targeted support for trainees preparing for or re-sitting the Simulated Consultation Assessment.

The programme aimed to:

- Focused preparation across key examination domains through structured and targeted learning activities.
- Repeated opportunities for deliberate practice to consolidate knowledge, skills, and performance.
- Development of effective consultation structure and time management skills.
- Strengthening of clinical reasoning and decision-making capabilities.
- Enhancement of communication, consultation, and relational skills that are transferable to everyday clinical practice.

- Constructive feedback and reflective learning to support continuous development and improved performance.
- Promotion of peer learning within a psychologically safe environment that encourages participation and growth.
- Increased learner confidence, examination preparedness, and overall readiness for independent practice.

My contributions included the overall design of the programme - including weekly detailed timetables, self-directed learning plans, bringing in educators to help with specific sessions – SCA examiners, linguistics, wellbeing. Mapping this to the SCA domains, writing presentations, delivering and facilitating the programme over the 7 weeks.

At the time of writing this report - this first 7 programme has not yet finished. I'm excited to see the results.

Personal Development and Future Aspirations

This fellowship has provided a unique opportunity to develop my skills as an educator, leader and programme developer.

Through both projects I have strengthened my abilities in:

Educational Leadership

- Curriculum and programme design.
- Stakeholder engagement.
- Collaborative working across organisations.
- Educational scholarship and evaluation.

Teaching and Facilitation

- Small-group facilitation.
- Managing reflective discussion.
- Delivering constructive feedback.
- Creating psychologically safe learning environments.

Project Management

- Strategic planning.
- Coordination of complex programmes.
- Evaluation and quality improvement.
- Resource development and implementation.

Digital Skills

- Running courses on Microsoft Teams/Zoom

- Using SharePoint as a collaborative platform
- Collaborative educational technologies – looking into Padlet, Improval.

The fellowship has reinforced my enthusiasm for medical education and demonstrated the impact that thoughtfully designed educational interventions can have on trainee development and wellbeing. It has provided a strong foundation in educational leadership, scholarship and curriculum development, while also increasing my confidence in leading projects at a regional level.

Fellowship CPD Funding

I undertook a course on Future Learn on developing online courses in a structured learning format.

I plan to use the money to attend a conference and undertake an ILM Mentoring/Coaching course and potentially use the funding to support further medical education modules once I have completed my PG Certificate.

Next Steps

In Autumn 2026 I will undertake GP Trainer training with the aim of becoming an Educational Supervisor. As part of this I will be undertaking a Post Graduate Certificate in Medical Education. I hope to build on the experiences gained during this fellowship by pursuing future educational leadership opportunities within postgraduate and undergraduate teaching. I am particularly interested in supporting trainees through structured learning approaches and contributing to research and quality improvement within medical education. I would like to develop into a training programme director role in the near future.

I have been unsuccessful in job applications so far for Training Programme Director Posts but I hope there will be more opportunities for educational posts in the future.

I am continuing to carry out teaching within the medical school on the graduate entry medical course.

I am grateful for the learning experiences I have had during the fellowship this year. It has also been a joy to meet and work with other fellows, meeting like-minded colleagues at the beginning of their journeys in education as well as the mentoring and advice from the more experienced educators I have worked with.