COMPASS®
COMPETENCY ASSESSMENT IN SPEECH PATHOLOGY
TRAINING MODULE 3: USING COMPASS® WITH MARGINAL STUDENTS
EXCERPT: CAPC SD 2014, PRESENTER: SUE McALLISTER
Training Module 3, Learning Activity 1: 
Using COMPASS® to assess a student having difficulty 
developing competency

Activity
Read the student vignette below and rate the student at end-placement on the COMPASS® 
competency units based on the description on the vignette.

Student vignette
Justine is completing her final adult placement and is due for her End-placement assessment 
later this week. After this placement, she will complete a final paediatric block placement in a 
community health centre. Justine has worked diligently so far during the placement. She has 
been eager to learn, participated in a wide variety of experiences and asked thoughtful 
questions. Justine seems to be able to self-evaluate regarding her own knowledge base and 
can devise strategies to address gaps in her knowledge. She is organised, completes tasks 
on time and seeks advice about how to prioritise her work. On previous adult placements, 
Justine gained experience in the areas of adult disability, stuttering and outpatient 
rehabilitation. This placement is in an adult acute hospital, and working in the area of 
dysphagia has challenged Justine’s knowledge and skills. She reports that she has been on a ‘steep 
learning curve’. However, Justine’s knowledge and experience in designing and 
implementing AAC systems has been very relevant and helpful in working with patients with 
global aphasia. Recently she confidently and capably presented an update to the staff of the 
department on low-tech AAC aides.

Justine often presents to the patients as nervous and unconfident during her interactions with 
them. This is communicated via a wavering voice and her language choices. She is often 
heard to say things such as ‘I think I might try ... I’m not sure, but ... Perhaps it might be 
better ... I haven’t done this before ... We’ll just have a little go at …’, and so forth. Her clinical 
educator feels that the patients subsequently do not have confidence in her, and this affects 
rapport, trust and satisfaction with their contact with Justine. In addition, Justine occasionally 
appears to be so concerned about following the correct procedures that she does not focus 
on what the patient might be feeling or experiencing. This seems to be at odds with her 
generally caring and attentive approach to people.

Justine is aware of the above situation and, in order to improve this, she has been focusing 
on her preparation—making sure she knows what she needs to do and why she is doing it. 
She has spent many extra hours away from the hospital doing this. However, to date, this 
does not seem to have helped, and her clinical educator told her that her planning and 
preparation for assessment and intervention are at Entry-level and she should now focus on 
being more efficient.

Her clinical educator has also observed that Justine takes a lot of time to write in the medical 
files. Justine’s clinical educator has given her feedback about reducing the length of her 
entries, increasing the specificity of the information given and writing with more direct 
language. Her clinical educator is also concerned that the entries do not clearly communicate 
to other members of the team what her recommendations are. Similarly, she appears anxious 
in case conferences. However, when speaking one-to-one with other team members, Justine 
is able to communicate clearly and correctly about her patients. Several other members of the
team have commented to her clinical educator about her professionalism and sensitivity to patients.

Justine’s clinical educator has observed her working well with her outpatient group for people with aphasia. Her planning, implementation and documentation regarding this group treatment has been excellent, to the point that her clinical educator is now only observing part of every second group treatment session.

Justine’s clinical educator is wondering how she is going to adequately reflect her strengths and weaknesses on her End-placement COMPASS®.
Worksheet: Discussion questions

1. What competencies did you identify as:
   a) Strengths:
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________
   
   b) Weaknesses:
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________
      __________________________________________________________________________

2. Comment on the relative contributions of the professional competencies and the CBOS units to the assessment.
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

3. Did you notice any relationships between ratings on the different competencies? For example, did a lower rating on a CBOS competency relate to a lower rating on a professional competency?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________

4. Did any other issues or questions arise while rating this student?
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________
   __________________________________________________________________________