Building Gatekeeper Skills Among Latinx and Hispanic Students Through a Virtual Role-Play Simulation

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Disclosure

Glenn Albright reports having an employment agreement with Kognito, the company that developed the *At-Risk for University & College Students* simulation.

Wendy Ordóñez does not have any conflicts to disclose.
Agenda

• Problem
• The Simulation
• Learning Model
• Demo
• Study Outcomes
• Implementation
• Q & A
The Statistics

• LH population in the U.S. reached a record **58.9** million
  • Largest ethnic minority in the U.S. (2018)

• 40% LH age 25+ years have college experience, **53%** for U.S. born LH (2015)

• **Acculturative Stress** (process of adopting to new culture and social patterns)
  • Higher perceived racial/ethnic discrimination
  • Higher suicidal ideation, anxiety and depression
  • College adjustment stress
  • High stigma against seeking mental health support services
    • Not in line with cultural norms
    • Lack of trust with MH professionals
The Statistics

• Untreated mental illness can significantly impact:
  • Academic attendance and success
  • Concentration
  • Test anxiety
  • Peer and family relationships
  • Self-esteem

• Barriers to Help Seeking:
  • Lack of awareness by faculty, peers, and support staff
  • Stigma associating with seeking mental health
Need for School Gatekeepers

Students can serve a critical gatekeeping function in the early identification and referral of their peers experiencing psychological distress\(^1\)

While effective at identifying externalizing disorders, people have difficulty identifying peers with internalizing disorders\(^2\)

What is a Gatekeeper?

1. Identify when a student is in psychological distress
2. Approach and talk with a student about your concerns
3. Make a referral to Mental Health Support Services

\(^2\)Cunningham JM and Suldo SM. School Ment Health 2014;6(4)237-250
From Kognito’s Suite: At-Risk for University & College Students

- 2 virtual role-play scenarios
- Online and self-paced
- Est 30 min to complete
- Satisfies state requirements
- Developed with input from mental health experts and students
Underlying Learning Methodologies for Teaching Effective Gatekeeper Skills
Evidence-based communication tactics drawn from components of:
• Neuroscience
• Social cognition
• Adult learning theory
• Applied game mechanics
Simulations and Learning Theory

Kognito simulations are based on the science of education and learning theory.

In role-plays, knowledge is actively constructed not passively accepted through:

- Active decision-making
- Unique pathways of experience for the user
- Continuous real-time feedback from virtual humans, simulation features
- Meaningful connections through embodied experiences

Kognito simulations are designed to increase learning by:

- Optimizing cognitive load
- Using elaborative rehearsal
  - Maximize transfer of learning from working to long-term memory
  - Support deep learning
Why Virtual Humans?

Instructional Benefits:
• Safe to self-disclose, experiment
• Increase in engagement, openness
• Decrease in transference reactions
• Decrease social evaluative threat

Other benefits:
• Personalization of experience
• Reach geographically dispersed areas
• Support multiple languages
• Reduce costs of updates
Simulation Demo
Kirkpatrick’s General Evaluation Model & Measures

Level 1
Satisfaction & Reactions

Level 2
Knowledge, Skills & Attitudes

Level 3
Behavior

Level 4
Overall impact on the Institution (Culture, ROI, etc.)
The Gatekeeper Behavior Scale (GBS) assessed educator attitudes

- **Preparedness (5 items)** (e.g. How would your rate your preparedness to recognize when a fellow student’s behavior is a sign of psychological distress?)
- **Likelihood (2 items)** (e.g. How likely are you to discuss your concerns with a student exhibiting signs of psychological distress?)
- **Self-efficacy (4 items)** (e.g. I feel confident in my ability to discuss my concerns with a fellow student exhibiting signs of psychological distress.)

Measures

Means efficacy was used to measure individuals’ belief in the utility of the tools available for performing a job\(^2\)

- **Means Efficacy (6 items)** (e.g. To what extent do you think the simulation is a useful tool?)
- **Changes in behavior from pre- to follow-up (3 items)** (In the past two academic months, approximately how many students have you: been concerned about; approached; referred to support services?)

Study Design: CONSORT Diagram

- Pre-Survey (N = 6239)
- Simulation
- Post-Survey (N = 6239)
- Follow-Up Survey (N = 277)

2 month time span
Demographic Breakdown (N=6,239)

Population Setting: 37 American states and territories
Participant School Profiles: 78 different schools (10 community colleges, 50 public universities, 15 private universities, and 3 non-academic institutions)
Date Range: August 2012 – December 2016
Level 1 Satisfaction Measures

- 98% rated simulation as “excellent”, “very good” or “good”

- 97% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that all students in their school should take the simulation

- 93% would recommend the simulation to their peers
Level 1 Means Efficacy

Means Efficacy
% Respondents Rating the Simulation from “Some Extent” to “A Very Great Extent”

- A useful tool: 97.50%
- Well constructed: 97.70%
- Easy to use: 98.00%
- Likely to help you help troubled students: 97.40%
- Based on scenarios that are relevant to you and your fellow students: 96.30%
- Aid you in getting timely help to your fellow students: 97.10%
Attitudinal Measures Preparedness, Likelihood & Self-Efficacy Gatekeeper Behavior Scale (N=6,239; Hotelling’s $T^2$ p<.001)

**Preparedness Composite**
Preparedness to identify, approach, and talk to and refer to mental health support services

**Likelihood Composite**
Likelihood to discuss concerns and recommend support services

**Self-Efficacy Composite**
Confidence in their ability to discuss concerns, recommend support services, and help a suicidal student seek help
Role Identification (N=6,239, p<.001)

Part of the role of students is to connect fellow students experiencing psychological distress with mental health services.
I may seek help from the counseling center myself when feeling psychologically distressed.
School Climate (n=2,862)

Note: This data was not included in the original analyses, but was recently implemented in surveys, thus the above data are preliminary school climate attitudes.
Gatekeeper Behavioral Change (n=277)

Note: n=277 due to high level of attrition between those who took the post survey and the follow up survey

*** $p < .001$

** $p < .01$
Implementation Strategies

- What is the most important thing to keep in mind when doing Outreach?
- Biggest motivator for people?
Passive Advertisement

- Bus shelter ads
- Floor Decals
- Lawn Signs
- Flyers
- LCD posts
- Social Media (your account and other departmental ones)
- Make use of current events/pop culture
- Animations
FRIENDS HELP FRIENDS

Worried about a friend, but don't know how to approach them? Kognito can help, and it only takes 30(ish) minutes!

FIU.KOGNITO.COM

Are you faculty, staff, or a student at FIU?

Have fun and learn how to help others through game-based exercises with a fully animated and emotionally responsive avatar!

Learn how to:
- Recognize signs of emotional stress in a fellow Panther
- Approach at-risk students/friends
- Discuss their concerns
- Connect them with resources on and off campus

Take advantage of it today!
(Works best on a desktop or laptop computer)

FIU.KOGNITO.COM
Even Link needs help sometimes.

Visit CAP5 caps.fiu.edu

Even Mario needs help sometimes.

Visit CAP5 caps.fiu.edu
Active Advertisement

- Peer Education
- Paid ads on social media
- Engaging faculty and staff
- Student leaders
More Ideas

- Obtain stats from Kognito native to your campus/area
- Hold a contest with graphic/art department
- Use creative power from talented coworkers
- Use Spanglish
- Use language familiar with the population in your area
- Free software
- Ask CAPS to collect data
CONSENT ON
Keep in Mind

- Short attention span
- Get students involved
- Colorful graphics
- Catchy headline
- Competition: Parties, fun activities, AB
Limitations

- Those who dropped out have higher Preparedness, Likelihood, and Self-Efficacy scores than those who remained to complete the post-test.
- Self-reported data.
- Gaining access to the schools’ support services (counseling) referral records would have allowed us to further measure the impact of the intervention.
- Within-group design.
Conclusions

- Innovative learning tool to support mental health and wellness in Latinx/Hispanic populations
- Easy to access
- Online 24/7
- Cost-effectively reaches large numbers of geographically dispersed student populations
- Effective across racial/ethnic demographics
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