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THE ISTC SIMULATION PROGRAM AT RYERSON

WHO WE ARE

Established at Ryerson University in 1990, the Interpersonal Skills Teaching Centre (ISTC) simulation program is designed to encourage the development of strong interpersonal skills and promote successful interactions in the workplace. Originally developed in collaboration with the standardized patient program at McMaster University, the ISTC has moved beyond medical applications and now offers a wide variety of simulations suitable for use in a range of community, social service, engineering, arts and business programs. The program offers experiential, interactive communications training and is a valuable professional development tool.

WHAT WE OFFER

- A catalogue of over 100 simulations that can be adapted to suit unique learning objectives and professional development needs
- Collaborative design of customized simulations
- A roster of over 50 simulators/actors representing characters of different ages, gender and cultural backgrounds
- A variety of simulation modalities including: live or video, with or without a feedback component & demonstrations

SIMULATIONS ARE...

Simulations are re-enactments of events that can occur during actual face-to-face interactions with clients, patients, consumers, or employees in the workplace.

They are a powerful learning tool where participants interact with the simulators in real time in a realistic, controlled, risk-free environment. Simulations provide first-hand learning experiences with opportunities for facilitation, feedback and reflection that make it easy for participants to transfer skills and knowledge to real life situations.

Research shows that simulations are more effective in the development of interpersonal skills than other exercises such as role-playing or case assignments.

SIMULATORS ARE...

Simulators are individuals trained to represent a specific character in a pre-arranged scenario. They are immersed in the history, personality and physical and/or emotional state of the character.
Simulators are able to recognize and respond to both verbal and non-verbal cues from the learner. This helps to create a powerful interaction enabling the participant to respond in real time at a high level of authenticity.

Simulators are experienced in giving timely, relevant, behaviour-based feedback that has an immediate impact on the participants.

WHY USE SIMULATION?

- To teach, evaluate & challenge learning
- To offer a range of experiences for skills practice
- To assess or develop a learner’s skill or knowledge over time
- To demonstrate effective methodology & practices

PREPARING FOR A SIMULATION

Simulations are most effective when they relate to course curriculum and reflect the objectives of the training. The following information will assist you in planning for a simulation and help you to realize the full potential of this powerful teaching and learning tool.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

- What outcomes are the learners expected to achieve?
- Is there a particular training goal to be addressed (i.e., teamwork, absenteeism in the workplace, diversity, etc.)?
- What skill practice should be emphasized (interviewing, critical thinking & analysis, mediation, etc.)?
- Is there a simulation in the catalogue to fit these needs or do you require a consultation to discuss customization?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES: Skills That Can Be Developed Through Simulation

- Listening Skills – attending, acknowledging, re-stating, paraphrasing, interpreting, checking perceptions, silence
- Critical & Analytical Thinking
- Different Questioning Styles – direct, open-ended, etc
- Maintaining Objectivity
- Responding to Non-Verbal Cues
- Conveying Understanding
Gaining Buy-In
Using Appropriate Body Language
Establishing Rapport & Building Trust...

TRAINING NEEDS: Some Issues That Can Be Addressed Through Simulation

- Diversity
- Mediation & Negotiation
- Job Readiness / Interview Skills
- Research & Qualitative Interviewing
- Teamwork – Team Building, Problem Solving
- Conflict Resolution
- Employee Skills Training & Development
- Performance Appraisal
- Leadership Assessment / Training
- Patient Compliance...

SELECTING A SIMULATION

There are two options for selecting a simulation to suit your training/teaching needs.

The ISTC’s catalogue offers a range of simulations covering issues relating to team & group dynamics, employment & business, diversity, marriage, aging, family dynamics, mental & physical health, and academics. Complex issues presented in specific simulations promote cross-cultural awareness, equity training, and sensitivity to people with special needs. All simulations can be used in a standardized format for multiple purposes or adapted to meet specific objectives.

We can also design a customized simulation uniquely tailored to suit your particular goals.

The ISTC Catalogue of Simulations is available online at www.ryerson.ca/ISTC. To obtain a printed copy or to inquire about customized simulations please call the ISTC office at (416) 979-5000 ext. 4802, or e-mail us at istc@ryerson.ca.
**Standard Simulations**

Refer to our catalogue for a synopsis of each simulation. These brief outlines include a list of possible learning objectives, a description of the roles to be played by the learner and the simulator, the setting where the interaction is supposed to be taking place and information for both the learners and the facilitator. Consider which simulation(s) will best suit your teaching/training goals. You should consult with the ISTC trainers for additional information about each scenario or to discuss possible modifications to the existing simulation.

**Custom Design A Simulation - The ISTC 3-Step Program:**

The training and administrative staff of the ISTC are experts in helping you to identify your training goals & learning objectives and build a simulation specifically designed to meet your needs. In consultation with our trainers we will assist you to:

1. Identify the training goals & learning objectives
   - Determine the learning/training objectives and structure for the simulation - e.g. assessment or training tool?
   - Target key issues; identify characteristics of the simulated characters and the role of the learner.

2. Build a simulation
   - Create characters, develop the story and structure the simulation
   - Review, revise, re-write based on your continued input.
   - Clarify learning objectives and facilitator role as the dynamic between the simulated character and the learner takes shape

3. Deliver
   - Cast and train simulators
   - Offer support and/or training to the facilitator.
   - Further clarify objectives and provides guidelines for feedback
   - Allow simulators to clarify, interpret and integrate their actions creating a complete character.
   - Send simulator to perform simulation and give feedback to participants.
   - Follow-up with an assessment and evaluation of the experience.

**SIMULATION COPYRIGHTS**

All simulation scenarios remain the property of the Ryerson University Interpersonal Skills Teaching Centre. All scripts and scenarios are to be used exclusively for simulations booked by the Interpersonal Skills Teaching Centre.
BOOKING A SIMULATION

You can pre-book your simulation online by visiting our web site at www.ryerson.ca/ISTC. If you have any questions or require further assistance please call the ISTC Administrative Coordinator at (416) 979-5000 ext. 4802, or e-mail us at istc@ryerson.ca.

Please refer to the name and number of the simulation you wish to book as listed in the catalogue, the date and time you’d like to hold the simulation, and the course or learning situation in which it will be used. The Administrative Coordinator will confirm the booking with you or have a trainer call you to assist in finalizing the details.

We request 4 weeks notice of a booking for a standard simulation. For a customized simulation, we require a minimum of 6 weeks notice.

In all cases you will receive a voice mail or an e-mail confirmation of your booking.

CONSULT WITH YOUR ISTC TRAINER

Once you have booked your simulation your request will be assigned to one of our ISTC trainers. They will consult with you to:

- Establish your learning objectives
- Select the format for your simulation
- Discuss any changes or modifications
- Determine the focus for feedback
- Offer any facilitation support you may require

Successful simulations occur when the facilitator effectively communicates to the trainer all essential information and learning objectives for the session. There are several opportunities to do this beginning in the planning phase, during training and preparation, right up to a few days before the simulation.

Your ISTC trainer will also ensure that the simulators are trained to meet your particular teaching goals and learning objectives. It is important for the trainer(s) to be aware of the participants’ level of experience and/or the learning objectives. This will help you both in:

- establishing the complexity of the simulator role
- make decisions concerning the intensity of the simulator’s portrayal
- determining the level of detail and disclosure desired in the scenario
- setting up cues to be used in time-outs to communicate to the simulator(s) how you would like them to modify their performance during the session depending on the learner’s response

Other points for discussion may include:

- General timing of the simulation (e.g. approximate timing of interview segments, time limits for time-outs and scheduled time for feedback)
- Should the simulator write notes during time-outs for feedback?

We can adapt or modify simulations as required to meet your needs. Please keep in mind that such changes should be managed well before the day of the session to ensure proper simulator training.
Session Format

Establish a format for your simulation and communicate this information to the learners prior to the day of the session.

To determine the best format for the session consider these questions:

- Will one learner interview or participate at a time or more than one?
- Will each learner start from the beginning or will the interview or continue from where the last participant left off?
- Will the interaction between simulator and participant be completed once or several times during the session?
- How much time will be allotted for set up, simulation, feedback and debriefing in the session?

Depending on your goals here are a few formats that may be used:

*Format A:* One learner interacts with the simulator at a time and each subsequent participant continues from where the last person left off.

*Format B:* Each learner or team of learners starts the interaction with the simulator(s) from the beginning and continues until the determined end point.

*Format C:* One learner completes the entire interaction with the simulator(s) while the facilitator evaluates his/her performance.

Learners

Be sure to inform participants about the simulation prior to the day of the session. This helps them to anticipate the experience and to identify questions in advance. Here are some discussion points to assist learners in preparing for the simulation.

What is a Simulation?

It is important to give participants an overview of the general nature of simulation and the reasons for including this exercise in the curriculum or training session. You may want to emphasize the fact that simulations are typically based on real cases, and the learner should expect to interact with the simulator as if it were an actual situation.

Purpose of the Session

Giving participants time to consider the specific goals and learning objectives of the simulation helps to focus their energy. For example, if it is known that the primary purposes are to develop skills in interacting with a targeted client population and to demonstrate a particular theoretical framework, learners can review these aspects before attending the session.
Background Information

The degree of background information to be shared with the participants varies depending on the purpose of the simulation. It is helpful for participants to know something about the situation; however, they should not be given more information than they would receive in a real-life interaction. Participants should understand their role(s), the setting for the interview and the context in which the simulator is interacting with them. Helpful information may include the fact that the interaction will occur with a single individual, couple, or a team. If the learner is expected to arrive with some relevant knowledge about the situation, it may include the general reason for the session (e.g., job interview, nursing evaluation, home care visit). If the simulation is set as a follow-up to an initial interview, it is important to provide enough information to allow the learners to understand what has happened up to this point.

In the catalogue descriptions, “info for learners” generally provides enough detail for the participants prior to the simulation. Do not reveal information from the case history which the learner will be expected to obtain from the simulator through the appropriate application of skills.

Voluntary Participation

It is important to encourage all learners to participate in an active interaction during the simulation. In some sessions the format chosen ensures each and every participant will directly interact with the simulator. In other situations, it may be helpful to seek out volunteers in advance. It is important to emphasize that the learning environment is a safe one in which participants can make mistakes with no fear of causing harm to the simulator. Class discussion during “time-outs” is another way for students to participate by offering hypotheses and suggestions.

"Time-Out" And "Time-In"

The use of “time-outs” contributes to the value of a simulation by allowing for discussion of critical issues or skills by the entire group. During the simulated interaction learners can call “time-outs” at any time, as can the facilitator. Observers, however, are not eligible to call time-outs. When “time-in” is called, the same learner can continue with the interaction or another participant can pick up where they left off.

In a “time-out” the simulator will freeze in role and not participate in any discussion. Feedback by the simulator is provided at the completion of the exercise. Participants should not engage the simulator out of role before or during the session for casual conversation, or to raise questions or issues relating to the simulation itself. The simulator's performance will not be altered or modified on the basis of the “time-out” discussion and he/she will continue in character as arranged once “time-in” is called. The simulator may use the "time-out" to inconspicuously take notes for later feedback.
On the Day of The Session

A few days before your session you will receive final confirmation from your ISTC trainer either by voice mail or e-mail. Please ensure that you have provided correct contact information and details of the location where the simulation will take place. As well, the simulator may have some last minute questions or points that require clarification.

Seating

Seating should be arranged to maximize audibility and visibility. Learners need to hear the interaction taking place between the interviewer and simulator and need to observe the body language of the simulator. Chairs arranged in a horseshoe formation allow each learner to participate without barriers. For a larger group, it may be helpful to place the learner and simulator on a platform if possible.

As facilitator, position your seat so that you can easily see the interviewer and simulator as well as the student observers. This will allow you to easily call "time-out" and facilitate the discussion.

Videotaping a Session

Videotaping is an option which allows for visual feedback to the learners. You need to inform participants of the plan to videotape the session and request their individual permission beforehand. Video cameras should be placed in the back of the room and be as unobtrusive as possible to help minimize learner anxiety and distraction.

*Please Note: The ISTC requires notice of videotaped sessions as some simulators have contracts that may prevent videotaping in certain situations. The ISTC will not be responsible for any changes to a planned simulation due to the lack of such notification.

Facilitating A Simulation

During the Simulation

The facilitator plays an active role during the simulation. The prime concern of the facilitator is to monitor the dynamics between the learner and the simulator. The facilitator must then assess when to intervene by calling a "time-out” and when to hold discussion until after the simulation is over.

"Time-outs" allow learners to analyse, reflect, and problem-solve. Discussion during "time-outs" also includes opportunities for the group to engage in generating hypotheses, sharing observations, developing conceptual linkages, developing alternative strategies for the intervention and supporting the person interacting with the simulator.
Questions used to facilitate discussion include:

- What have we learned so far?
- What do we still need to know?
- What behaviours have you observed?
- What hypotheses can be generated at this time?
- What strategies can be used to approach this situation?

An average duration for "time-out" is 5-10 minutes. If the break is too long the flow and realism of the simulation may be compromised.

The participant(s) may choose to continue with the simulation after the "time-in" is called, or the facilitator may call upon another volunteer to take over. The goal of the facilitator in managing "time-outs" is to encourage participants to engage actively with the simulator while maintaining the risk-free nature of the exercise.

**Feedback to Participants**

An important feature of the simulation is the opportunity it provides for immediate and direct feedback about performance. Feedback, where required, is given at the end of the session and can be delivered in different ways depending on your training needs and learning objectives. Most commonly, comments from the simulator are addressed to individual learners or teams of interviewers. The simulator should be given a few minutes at the end of the simulation to come out of role and to introduce him/her self.

Simulators are trained to give behaviour-based feedback and to balance their comments with an equal focus on positive reinforcement and constructive criticism. All feedback is given based on the simulator's feelings and reactions when in character. Learners need to know that the simulator does not give feedback on the efficacy of specific intervention strategies of theories. Rather, feedback will focus on interpersonal communication skills and the impact of the participant’s professional approach. If you want certain areas to be highlighted during feedback, such as body language and questioning skill, you should inform the trainer prior to the simulation.

Learners may also wish to ask the simulator(s) for feedback in particular areas of interest. If you have additional feedback to give at the end of the session it can be added to the simulator's comments. It is important to plan for enough time for feedback as this is crucial to the learner's development. Approximately 1/4 of the session should be dedicated to feedback.

**From the Simulator’s Point of View**

You might ask the simulator(s) to consider the following interpersonal communication behaviours:

**Opening**

- How was the client greeted? Were introductions made?
- Was there appropriate small talk?
- Were the purpose and direction of the interview stated?
Use of Questioning
- Were open-ended questions used to allow the client the opportunity to
give information in an unstructured manner?
- Was the client given the opportunity to indicate what is most important?

Active Listening
- Was paraphrasing used?
- Was empathy displayed throughout the interview?
- Was clarification used?
- Did the interviewer summarize the details collected?

Providing Resources
- Was the interviewer honest with clients when asked for information or
advice?
- Was the participant able to admit that he or she did not know and seek
support from the group to answer a question?

Facilitative Behaviour
- Were the client's questions encouraged periodically during the interview?
- Did the interviewer set the tone for questions?
- Was appropriate body language demonstrated?

Pacing of the Interview
- Was a comfortable pace established without awkward pauses and
interruptions?
- Was enough time provided for the client to respond?

Client Perspectives
- Were the client's concerns elicited and discussed?
- Was the impact of the situation on the client's family and family lifestyle
discussed?
- Were the client's support systems discussed?
- Were the client's expectations elicited?
- Was the client's understanding of information given during the interview
checked?

Closing The Interaction
- Was the discussion summarized?
- Was an action plan reviewed noting responsibilities of each person?
Debrief and Follow Up

At the end of the session the simulator will give you a Quality Report Form and time sheet to complete and sign. Please complete and return the time sheet to the simulator and return the Quality Report Form directly to the ISTC office, Room SHE - 671

Follow-up With the Trainer

After your simulation session, it is helpful to contact the trainer with some relevant feedback. Your follow-up discussion may include:

- how the simulation met or did not meet your goals
- the strengths and weaknesses of the simulator's performance
- the strengths and weaknesses of the feedback offered

At this time, it is also helpful to ask the trainer for any suggestions he or she may have on how to improve the simulation session.

Debriefing

If you will be meeting with the participants in the weeks following the simulation, you should plan a debriefing session on the simulation experience. For some participants learning may be particularly significant after reflection. The insights that were gained during the simulation can then be drawn on and linked to subsequent learning. There are many creative methods to elicit reactions about the simulation experience from the learners. They may be asked to reflect on their experience through:

- group discussion
- reflective dialogue
- journal entry
- "one minute" paper or executive summary
- poem
- cartoon
- drawing

These reactions may be mandatory part of the session, or simply a voluntary part of the experience.