

USING INTERDISCIPLINARY COLLABORATION FOR COURTROOM SIMULATION WITH SOCIAL WORK STUDENTS

Because the law and issues of the law is intimately embedded across all areas of social work practice, realizing high practitioner versatility must involve the adequate preparation of social work students regarding legal structures and processes within legal environments. Such an effort is advantageous to the continuity of the social work profession.

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COLLABORATORS

UTA Pre-Law Center
CRCJ 4303-001
SOCW 4350-008
SOCW 5392-005

QUALITY ENHANCEMENT PLAN

Help students gain practical skills for effective professional collaboration.

Utilize digital technology to deliver course instruction.

Prepare students for future work in a specialized practice area.

Engage students in a form of experiential learning that involves faculty and students from multiple disciplines.

INTRODUCTION

Social workers perceived inaccurate or incompetent by legal professionals fall short of effectively influencing outcomes in legal environments despite good intentions. The capacity to skillfully engage in legal processes within legal environments requires operational and meta competence that may be developed through simulated learning activities (Bogo et al., 2011, Reeves et al., 2017). This project, situated in an online asynchronous cross-listed course, utilized an enhanced adaptation of the Objective Structured Clinical Examination (OSCE) framework having interdisciplinary collaboration as a critical component for simulated learning on the art of testifying in court.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop student capacity in using legal tools and in skillful execution of legal processes.
- To strengthen student ability to apply the mechanical standards of testifying in court.

METHODOLOGY

A virtual simulated exercise where SOCW 4350/5392 students performed as witness to a criminal case in a fictitious courtroom with students of CRCJ 4303 who performed as standardized legal actors in roles of judge, defense, and prosecutor. The simulation involved three primary tasks as noted below.

TASK 1

SOCW & CRCJ Students review assigned criminal case

TASK 2

SOCW students write witness statements
CRCJ students review witness statements

TASK 3

SOCW students give oral testimony
CRCJ students perform direct and cross examination

Simulations were facilitated in 20-minute rotation.

ANALYSIS

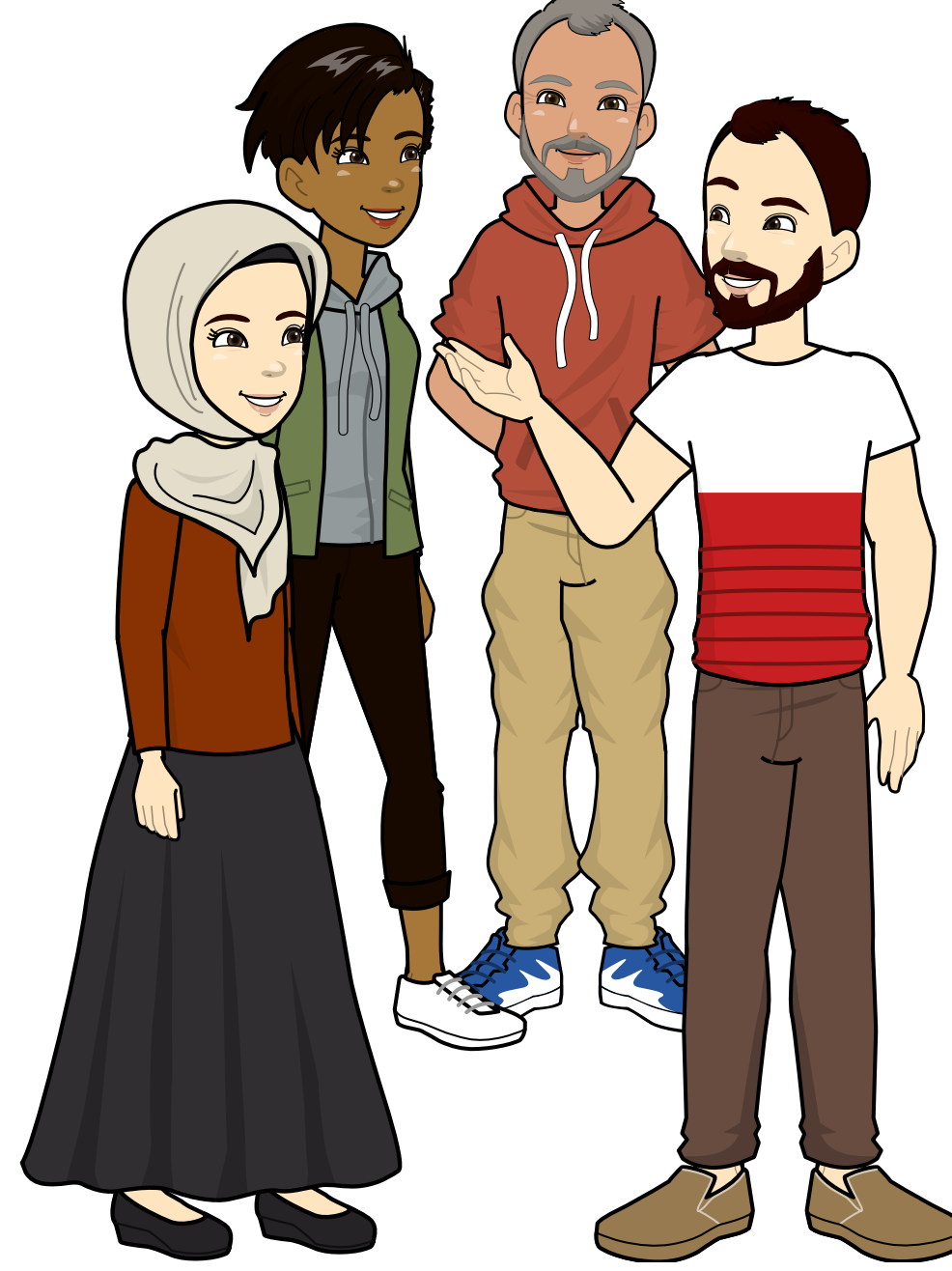
Qualitative data was gathered to determine learning gains and challenges in using courtroom simulation to facilitate competence in performing the strategies, skills, and techniques of testifying in court.

FACULTY

Simulation Performance Assessment

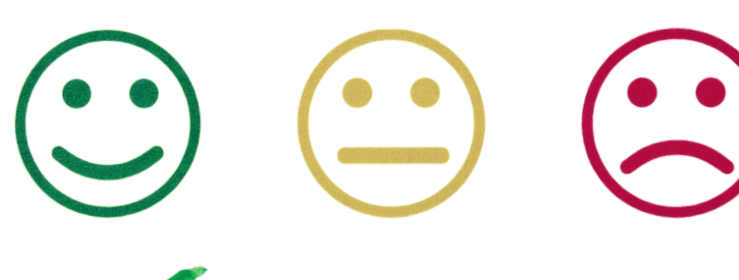
STUDENT

Pre-Simulation Survey
Post Simulation Survey
Post Simulation Reflection



LESSONS LEARNED

A self-reflective activity guided students in sharing perceptions on what went well, didn't go well, challenges, and overall learning experience.



The 6-item assessment rated performance as a strength or opportunity for improvement.*

A peer-to-peer feedback exchange occurred immediately following the simulation exercise. Faculty observers also offered comments to students at this time.

*Assessment items: prompt arrival, professional appearance and behavior, evidence of preparation, demeanor during examination, response to direct and cross examination

RESULTS/FINDINGS

3-day simulated exercise Included 2 faculty, 12 SOCW students, 9 CRCJ students

Among SOCW students, **7 out of 12*** reported being satisfied with their simulation performance.

7 out of 12 Agree*

Helped understand courtroom process, develop skill in applying the mechanics of testifying.

7 out of 12 Agree*

Useful and valuable to learning and developing as a future social worker.

IMPORTANT!

Attending to student expressions of nervousness and lack of confidence was necessary for ongoing active support of learning.

CONCLUSION

Students increased their operational and meta competence through participation in the mock testimony simulated exercise. Performance during direct and cross examination remains an opportunity for improvement among participating SOCW students. Interdisciplinary collaboration was a critical component for simulation and proved to be a meaningful benefit to SOCW students in strengthening their professional competence on giving courtroom testimony.

RELATED LITERATURE

- Bogo, M., Rawlings, M., Katz, E., & Logie, C. (2014). *Using simulation in assessment and teaching: OSCE adapted for social work*. Council on Social Work Education
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- Reeves, J., Green, T., Marsden, L., & Shaw, N. (2017). myCourtroom: Rosie's family go to court; The use of simulations in preparing social workers for court. *Social Work Education*, 37(2), pp. 234-249. <http://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2017.1391772>
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