



UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON

Evaluating the impact of role-play in online clinical psychology learning

Anna Armstrong (Senior Learning Designer, University of London)
Christine Atieno Amolo (CODE Student Fellow, University of London)
Luke Woodham (CODE Fellow, St George's, University of London)

RIDE, March 2023

london.ac.uk



What is the project about?



UNIVERSITY
OF LONDON



CENTRE FOR ONLINE &
DISTANCE EDUCATION



Learning clinical psychology skills online

london.ac.uk

Online role-play



Prepare for the
scenario



Meet online



Take on role of
psychologist and client

Why is it important?

A novel
approach?

Is it worth it?

Is it too
challenging?

What was
the impact
on learning?

Study Design

Mixed methods

- Aimed to get responses to a short survey, and enough volunteers to make 2 focus group discussions i.e. 6-12 people

Recruitment via regular emails from module lead, announcements on VLE and attendance at synchronous sessions to explain the survey

Survey based upon an instrument designed for Virtual Patient resources in medical education

- Includes subscales for authenticity of the client encounter, cognitive strategies for the consultation, coaching during consultation



Initial findings

Across 2 cohorts of students enrolled in the programme, we have had 8 survey responses (5 from 2022/23 cohort and 3 from 2021/22), and 1 student volunteer

Initial survey responses showed:

- Limited engagement with the role-play activities
- General agreement with the constructs in the survey

Interview with volunteer showed that they engaged with some of the role-play activities, but did not include the observer role in the activities or conduct a debrief

Anecdotal report to module lead suggested students feel they lack the training required to give feedback

How many of the clinical role play activities that you have covered in the module so far have you participated in?



■ None of them ■ Some of them
■ Most of them ■ All of them

Challenges and open questions

Is the lack of engagement with the study indicative of wider engagement issues?

What more can we do to reach the students with this study?

What can we do to foster greater engagement?

How can we better set student expectations for their participation in the module?

How can we capture any conclusions beyond the role-play activities?

How can we improve student confidence in giving feedback?

Do we understand what the distance students want from their learning?

How can we encourage students to use the observer role to facilitate reflection?

Any questions?



UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

london.ac.uk

Senate House, Malet Street,
London WC1E 7HU

	Factor/subscale	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
While working on the role-plays in the role of a psychologist, I felt I had to make the same decisions a psychologist would make in real life	Authenticity	0	0	0	3	3
While working on the role-plays in the role of a psychologist, I felt as if I were the psychologist caring for the service users	Authenticity	0	0	0	3	3
While working on the role-plays in the role of a service user, I felt as if I was a service user seeking treatment	Authenticity	0	0	4	2	0
While working through the scenarios, I was actively engaged in revising my initial image of the service user's problem as new information became available	Cognitive strategies	0	0	1	3	2
While working through the scenarios, I was actively engaged in thinking about which findings supported or refuted my reasoning	Cognitive strategies	0	0	0	3	3
The questions I was asked while working through the scenarios were helpful in enhancing my reasoning	Coaching	0	0	1	3	2
The feedback I received was helpful in enhancing my reasoning	Coaching	0	1	3	1	1
Overall, working through the scenarios was a worthwhile learning experience	Global score	0	0	1	2	3