Experiential Learning in Addiction Education

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About the Workshop:

By the end of this workshop:

- Understand the purpose and benefit of experiential learning
- Its application to undergraduate addiction education
- Specific experiential activities that can be incorporated into your courses
- View examples of artificial intelligence as an experiential learning tool
- Hear from students how these techniques have enhanced their addiction education experience.
Experiential Learning in Addiction Education
Using Virtual Reality

Introduction of Presenter

• Assistant Professor of Human Services with Old Dominion University.
• 16 years of experience as a behavioral health professional in school, community based, outpatient, private and public agencies
• Her research interests include SUD, behavioral health practitioner competency, ethics and clinical training in academia.

Current Experiences in Addiction Education

What are some common stereotypes or initial impressions our students may have of the substance use and recovery population?
What is Experiential Learning?

Experiential learning is an approach to learning that focuses on learning through EXPERIENCE. This approach to learning is more specifically defined by LEARNING THROUGH REFLECTION AND DOING. This style of learning is different from didactic learning where the learner is playing a comparatively passive role.

Why Experiential Learning in Addiction Education?

- Many of our students are entering the practitioner field with little personal experience or empathy for the SUD population. Students also require skill practice in many of the core competencies for addiction practice.
- This lack of experience and empathy and understanding of the population has the ability to increase stereotypes and reduce the professional's ability to display empathy, unconditional positive regard and utilize other vital skills when working with these populations.
- Going beyond disseminating information about addiction practice and building experiential learning into our teaching enhances the overall learning experience for students.
- With more research supporting the use of technology and artificial intelligence in education, its implications in addiction education warrants more exploration.
Overview of Interventions

- The information presented is part of an IRB approved study focused on fostering empathy, professional identity and clinical skills in addiction education for undergraduate human service students.

- The experiential learning techniques were implemented in three undergraduate human service courses:
  - C1: An entry level HMSV addiction course focused on professional identity development, relapse prevention and recovery.
  - C2: An advanced HMSV course focused on case management and crisis intervention with SUD clients
  - C3: An advanced HMSV addiction course focused on SUD practitioner skill development and EBP

- 65 students all together participated in the interventions described as a requirement for the courses; 38 students provided consent to have their information included in the study.

EXPERIENTIAL USING VR: WHAT IS MURSION?

Mursion is a virtual reality platform that uses artificial intelligence and human interaction to create simulation experiences for improving human performance.
**HOW DOES MURSION WORK?**

**VR Simulation**
Transform learners through experiential learning.

**AI + Human Interaction**
Combines true human intelligence with the scalability and data-driven possibilities of AI.

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**Adult Avatars Can**
1. Randomly move hands
2. Access tablet/cell

**Individual Adult Avatar**
(Sunny Office)

**Adult Avatars Can’t**
1. Get out their seats
2. Do specific movements
Levels of Tension

Preparing to Use Virtual Reality in Addiction Education

The instructor should take the time to design the scenario to maximize benefit for the student learning outcomes:

- The avatars usually will need training on how to simulate a client with SUD, case management or crisis needs effectively.
- Schedule time to gain education as an instructor on how to incorporate it in your teaching for face to face and distance learning.
- Experiential Learning requires students to reflect on learning, this was done face to face, via peer-to-peer learning as well as in writing in this study.
- In each virtual reality simulation, there was a teaching assistant to assist with small group discussions as well as to reduce the size of students observing each live simulation.
Overview of Experiential Activities with Student Outcomes

Experiential Learning in Course #1

Target Areas:
- Professional identity development
- Empathy
- Relapse prevention and recovery
- Introducing students to the addiction treatment field
Prior to Engaging In Experiential Learning

On the first day of the course, students were asked to reflect and write down the first thing that came to mind when considering these questions:

Describe a person experiencing active addiction

What causes addiction?

If you were at an event and found out that someone had a substance use history, what would you do?

What should society do with people who are actively in addiction and have not committed to recovery?

Student Responses:

**Question 1:**

"Someone who is dirty, messy hair, maybe homeless; falling down all the time begging for change."

"Someone smelly who can’t hold down a job, they are not to be trusted and are like the low life’s of society."

**Question 2:**

"They do not care about the people they hurt; they are weak minded and can stop whenever they want to but they choose to keep using."

"they do not care about their family. They are selfish and put drugs before everything else."

**Question 3:**

"I would hide my purse because they may steal from me."

"I would not speak to them anymore, I would feel really uncomfortable around them because they are sketchy."

**Question 4:**

"Put them in jail if they are stealing; its their own problem not society’s"

"I don’t know, I guess just let them figure out their life."
Overview of Experiential Learning Tools in Course #1

1. All students in the course participated in a 30-day abstinence project.

2. All students participated in three hypothetical group treatment sessions with the instructor as the facilitator of the group.

3. All students were required to attend three community-based support groups: two targeted toward the client and one targeted toward family members.

4. Students engaged in a virtual reality session where they facilitated a clinical session with an avatar that was seeking to develop a relapse prevention plan after leaving a detoxification facility.

5. Students were given opportunities to reflect on their experience via live in class discussions as well as via two writing opportunities.

Experiential Technique: Abstinence Project

• In order to gain experience with the recovery process, students were asked to abstain from a behavior or substance of choice for a period of 30 days.

• Common choices included but were not limited to the following:
  • A. Junk food, texting while driving, unhealthy relationships, television, fast food, profanity.
  • B. Alcohol, nicotine, social media, caffeine, unhealthy relationships

• Students were required to maintain a daily record of their days of sobriety throughout this 30 day period.
Experiential Learning Outcome: Abstinence Project

- Students gained experiential understanding of cravings, urges, and binges.
- Experience with guilt, shame and self doubt associated with relapse
- Better conceptualization of identifying triggers for relapse and lifestyle changes.
- The role people places and things play in sobriety

Experiential Technique: Simulated Group Treatment

- Throughout the course of their 30 days of abstinence, students were required to attend **3 in class group sessions facilitated the instructor.**

- Prior to each group session, students were asked to complete a “check in” which consisted of them reporting the following:
  A. Their days of sobriety
  B. Their feelings on the date of the session and since beginning their sobriety
  C. Any good news they would like to share.

Each of the group sessions utilized **an interactional approach to group treatment** and presented open discussion topics which ranged from lifestyle adjustments, cravings, urges, relapse triggers, guilt and shame etc.
Experiential Learning Outcome: Simulated Group Treatment

- Students gained experience with understanding group treatment from the perspective of clients.
- Students were able to reflect on their experiential learning with peers.
- Students gained experiences in group dynamic development.
- They also gained experience with vulnerability, self-awareness and disclosure that practitioners often overlook with clients.
- The role of peer support in client recovery as many students reported reinitiating sobriety after relapse.

Experiential Technique: Community Based Support Group Attendance

- Throughout the course, students were required to attend three community based support groups:
  - Two of the groups had to target the person in recovery (e.g. Narcotics Anonymous or Alcoholics Anonymous etc)
  - One of the groups had to target the family of the person in recovery (e.g Nar-Anon or Al-Anon)

Important:

- Proof of their attendance via signature sheets
- Instructor facilitated didactic lecture on CBSG to prepare students.
- Reflection was done using live and written means.
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Experiential Learning Outcome:
Community Based Support Group

- Students were able to challenge their stereotypes about the addiction population
- Interacting with those in recovery reduced anxiety, fears, and apprehension
- Empathy and understanding of the addiction population were increased

- Family meetings provided opportunities for students to see the impact of addiction on the family.
- Reflecting on this experience enhanced their learning and understanding of this experience

Experiential Activity:
Virtual Reality for Skill Practice Development

ODU HMSV 447 Relapse Prevention

Learner-Facing Vignette

Instructor

The goals of this simulation are to successfully facilitate a relapse prevention session with a client who has sought out services with a hypothetical substance use treatment and prevention agency in order to maintain sobriety. The learner will have 30 minutes to practice basic helping skills of facilitating a collaborative dialogue leading to a relapse prevention plan, establishing and maintaining rapport. In addition, the helping skills of using open ended questioning, unconditional positive regard, establish rapport, and other areas learned in previous courses are vital to this simulation. This is not a progressive simulation and it is assumed that your client has already completed an intake and has gone through the assessment process with a recommendation of relapse prevention leading to discharge from the treatment facility.

Objectives:

- OBJECTIVE 1: Establish rapport with a client and get them to tell their story.
- OBJECTIVE 2: Collaborate with your client on a relapse prevention plan using a person-centered approach.
- OBJECTIVE 3: The learner will utilize helping skills of active listening, unconditional positive regard, being genuine, summarizing, reflection, and

Challenge 1:

Scenario Guide

Author(s)

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Old Dominion University

Avatars

Scott Smithers (Figurative name, sim specialist can choose the avatar)

Environment

The sky scraper conference room

Intensity Level

Low Behavior
Students Were Asked The Same Questions at the End of the Course.....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question 1:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Someone who has gotten into a rough spot in their life. There is still hope for them but they have to want it for themselves.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Someone who probably experienced something bad in their life and because they couldn’t cope or didn’t have proper resources became an addict.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Addiction can happen to anyone.”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Question 2:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Sometimes it’s the only way out of a bad situation life abuse, trauma or loss.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“There isn’t one answer, you have to ask that person because everyone’s experience is different.”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Question 3:</th>
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<tr>
<td>“I would encourage them to stay in recovery because it can be difficult.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I wouldn’t say anything not unless they wanted me to know; I would be accommodating though by not having alcohol at a party if they were coming to try to help them out but not embarrass them.”</td>
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<tr>
<th>Question 4:</th>
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<tr>
<td>“Try to give them as many resources as possible. The meetings showed me how much they struggle to keep their sobriety and do normal things that we take for granted.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Give them support if they are willing to take it. They are fighting a hard battle every day.”</td>
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Experiential Learning in Advanced Courses:

- Course 2: Addiction Practitioner Skill Development
- Course 3: Crisis Intervention and Case Management
Overview of Experiential Activities

Students in these courses, enhanced their learning from the initial addiction course. These courses focused on their practitioner identity through the following experiential activities:

**Course 1: Advanced Addiction Course**

1. Live experience administering urine drug screens and BAC

2. In Class sessions on the following SUD counselor tasks
   - Reviewing UDS results with clients
   - Getting informed consent
   - Discharging a client successfully and unsuccessfully
   - Revive training
   - Practicing diagnosing using the DSM-5 with scenarios

3. Engaging in virtual reality sessions focused on facilitating an intake assessment with a client with comorbid needs.
   - Exploring treatment options specifically abstinence vs. harm reduction models

**Course 2: Case Management & Crisis Intervention**

- Live experience addressing ethical dilemmas with clients
- Completing intake assessment, session notes, releases of information, reviewing and obtaining consent, treatment planning, discharge planning
- Engaged in Virtual Reality session focused on:
  - Intakes and Assessments
  - Disarming an angry client

Experiential Activity Student Outcomes

- Gained hands on knowledge on Urine Drug Screening
- Students learned how to reverse an Opioid overdose
- Learned how to facilitate DSM-5 diagnostics intakes and assessments
## Experiential Learning in Distance Education
### Face to Face Technique & Application to Distance Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Simulated groups with instructor</td>
<td>Scheduled synchronous sessions using zoom, adobe connect etc</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abstinence project with live reflection</td>
<td>Abstinence project can be done with weekly discussion boards requiring peer responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Playing of skills</td>
<td>Assign small groups with students meeting in google meet, break out rooms in zoom etc and given scenarios to process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virtual Reality</td>
<td>Virtual Reality sessions can be scheduled via zoom and pre-signing up for sessions.</td>
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## Virtual Reality with Distance Education: Remote Simulations Via Zoom

PC compatible

Mac compatible

Apple & Android compatible
Demo: Virtual Reality Simulation

- Students in this simulation were given experiential experience facilitating a case management intake with a client with crisis needs and SUD needs.
- Students not in the simulation were required to observe with a goal of providing peer to peer feedback.
- Students are role playing providing case management services in an academic setting.

Reflection Outcomes from Students with Mursion

**Participant 1**

“One thing I that learned from participating in the Mursion Lab activity is that, clients are not always going to give you a direct answer. During the activity, my partner and I asked Amanda to tell us about her family. Amanda replied, “They are okay I guess.” We then, had to reverse the question in a manner in which Amanda was able to talk about her relationship with her parents and family.”

**Participant 2**

“This activity was a great way for me to gain the experience of client interaction. This activity made me feel nervous, even though the avatar was not an actual person. There were points in the simulation where I felt stuck. I introduced myself to the client and after hearing her voice, I was immediately terrified.”

**Participant 3**

“This experience has helped me practice skills taught in the classroom with someone who is not one of my classmates. This is the closest learning experience I have had before entering the field. This experience will help me in my internship next semester. I will feel more prepared for case management tasks such as intake interviews.”

**Participant 4**

“This experience has given me the opportunity to utilize some of the skills I have been taught in class, I wish we had more opportunities like this. This experience has allowed me to enhance my interviewing skills, so I will be more prepared when I enter the Human Services field.”
Questions?

THANK YOU!

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