Virtual Role-Players Are Shown to Improve Soft-Skill Training

Traditional role-plays are compared to virtual ones. SIMmersion's virtual role-players are used for the comparison.

COLUMBIA, MD, UNITED STATES, October 5, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Traditional role-plays are used to give learners a chance to practice a large variety of soft skills (also known as conversational skills) including sales, leadership, healthcare, suicide prevention, addiction counseling, conflict management, and thousands

Figure 1. Traditional Role-Play

of others. Direct feedback from the practice is an essential key to learning a new soft skill, but on-the-job experiences can be expensive and misleading.

> "
> Research shows that SIMmersion's virtual role-players build lasting skills in various target populations including those who are highly educated and those who are not."
>
> *Dale Olsen, Ph.D.*

Role-plays are often used in a classroom with another student acting as a role-player; other times an instructor or even a professional actor will act as a role-player. The feedback can come from the role-player, an instructor, or from the learner watching a video of themselves.

Yet many people don't like participating in them, for good reasons. They are put in a position of trying to apply a new skill while they are just learning it, and while others are watching. They know the criticism in the form of feedback is coming and that can make them uncomfortable or defensive.

Virtual Role-Plays (VRPs)

The term "virtual role-plays" is used in different ways, but it involves a communication exercise with a role-player. In some situations, people use the term when describing a role-player who is a person participating in online role-plays. Others define a VRPs as a computer-generated

person designed to play a specific role for the purpose of training a soft skill. We will use this second definition here and consider SIMmersion's VRPs as examples.

SIMmersion's VRPs

SIMmersion's VRPs are some of the higher quality ones and are considered here as an example for the purpose of the comparison. The systems are designed to replicate real experiences in a relevant and authentic scenario without compromising their training value. To replicate real experiences, the role-player must appear real, so videos are used to capture behavioral patterns and subtle expressions of a carefully directed professional actor. The player must behave like a real person with memory and evolving emotions. To meet the training needs, each practice must provide a new and different experience.
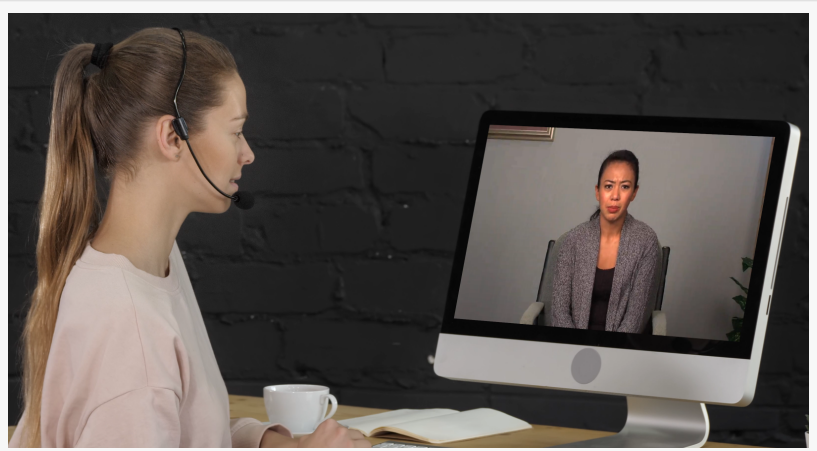

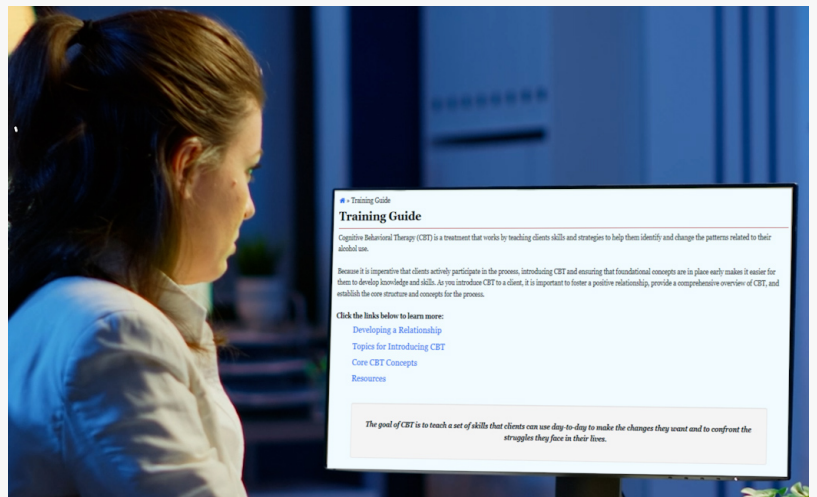Figure 2. Learner Working with SIMmersion's VR Role-Player

Figure 3. Learner looking at Summary Feedback

Advantages of SIMmersion's VRPs

1. More Practice: After a traditional role-play practice, learners normally will not get the needed chances for more practice and to develop and refine their skills. SIMmersion's VRPs are designed for as much practice as the learner wants, providing a different experience with each practice.

2. Better Role-Play Experience: During traditional role-plays, creating the right experience can be challenging. Other learners are often used as role-players but cannot be expected to provide a realistic experience. Even paid role-players need to be trained and may still go off script. SIMmersion's VRPs are carefully scripted to make every experience a realistic one by drawing on the experiences of subject-matter experts.

3. Less Expensive & Available 24/7: If actors or other paid role-players are used, they require training and managing. SIMmersion's VRPs are always available and stay on script.

4. Non-Embarrassing Feedback: Unlike the traditional role-play, SIMmersion's VRPs provide comprehensive feedback in a non-personal way that doesn't come with embarrassment. The

learner is interacting with a computer or other device and receiving ongoing and summary feedback in the form of both explanatory and positive comments.

5. Consistent Feedback: With traditional role-plays, the feedback can seem inconsistent and unfair. SIMmersion's VRPs systems provide computer-driven feedback, without regard to who the learner is.

6. Prompt Support: In traditional role-plays, learners are free to say whatever they want. However, there are no guidelines to learn from. They will say whatever pops into their head, often without careful consideration. The free-form style offers no educational information as there are no examples to consider. In SIMmersion VRPs, learners will be supported by a range of prompts, while receiving ongoing feedback on their selections. They learn to apply the principles needed for communicating the ways the experts do. A few may even draw on the scripted words in future communications.

Conclusion

SIMmersion Training with VRPs meets the standards for best practices in computer-based training. Because care has been taken to make the role-player seem as real as possible, it immerses the learner in what can seem like a real experience. Try them out for free. Multiple research studies have shown training with SIMmersion's VRPs builds lasting skills.

About SIMmersion (https://www.simmersion.com/)

SIMmersion is a 20-year-old company whose mission is to train communication skills faster and more effectively by combining the world's most realistic simulation experiences with interactive training content and extensive feedback. For more information contact SIMmersion by calling 443 283 2555 or online at www.simmersion.com/contact.

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