Use of Online Video Conferencing to Facilitate Social Work Role Plays

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Background

- Role plays have served an instrumental role in social work education by providing opportunities to acquire counseling skills (Macgowan & Vakharia, 2012; Duffy, Das & Davidson, 2013; Vapalahti, Marttunen & Laurinen, 2013)

- This project tested various online video conferencing tools to facilitate role plays for students who live in different locations and who are unable to be at the same geographic location at the same time

- Needed to fit within an overall asynchronous program and had to overcome the limitations of (our instance of)Collaborate/Adobe Connect

- Key features of the technology included the ability to:
  - facilitate real-time interaction
  - be operating system independent
  - work well with laptops and wifi connections
  - record the session for later viewing and feedback
  - be CHEAP, i.e, inexpensive to use

Exemplars

Google Hangouts Broadcast mode

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dy_V8Q6sS1k

Google Hangouts speaker/earphone issue at 1:20

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06QiqYUhH5c

Using Zoom as a traditional videotaped role play

http://youtu.be/N7D5WGvwXy0

Zoom, Speaker View, lighting issue

http://youtu.be/Tj3jUC0YdG0

Smartphone with Speaker View and Disclaimer

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l-bV5TnO4sk&feature=youtu.be

Using with videoANT

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxISc9XHPRM&feature=youtu.be

https://ant2.cehd.umn.edu/rzznkoIkcq

Findings

Hardware issues

- Older laptops (6+ years) worked fine
  - Smartphone app worked without issue, though not in gallery view
- However, some with newer laptops reported problems
  - Most likely default microphone configurations
  - Headsets significantly improved audio quality

The software

- Students were able to use Google Hangouts and Zoom
  - Easy to install and upload to YouTube
- Most found the directions easy to follow; however, they much preferred the video tutorials
- Video quality was not always ideal, i.e., latency
  - Contributing factors appeared to be:
    - the time of day
    - having sufficient lighting on the participants

Time and effort

- There were no distinguishable time and effort demands associated with the online video conferencing

- Several students reported they would not have been able to do the role play if not for online videoconferencing due to travel barriers, job obligations, etc:

  - "There might be a little less time involved as it was completed without having to travel to a mutual location. It was very convenient for a single mother, someone out of town, and one traveling out of town for other appointments to coordinate a time to complete the assignment."

Most importantly - SKILLS

- Students and professors provided a range of feedback regarding skills acquired
- Some students found the technology as "distancing" compared to a face-to-face encounter
- Alternatively, some students found the encounter more "intimate" in that the pressure to "perform in front of others" was not felt
  - "It is definitely not as natural as in-classroom role plays, but that's to be expected. I think our actual verbal interaction was pretty comparable and I feel it is good technology to practice for the future of clinical social work."
  - "It was an adjustment with the eye contact being difficult, though with the camera being straight on each person, it was easy to see body language, non-verbal idiosyncrasies, as well as facial expressions."

Incidental findings

- Have students get to know each other before role plays
- "What a great way to provide counseling to those in remote locations (servicemen and women overseas?)!"
- "I thought [it] was relatively easy once I got my account set up **and did a run through to verify that everything worked**."
- For the traditional classroom:
  - "After I get off work and drive an hour+ to Columbia I don't feel like I can give the proper amount of attention to an assignment after class. This is a great tool to overcome that problem and still have an effective educational experience."

Incidental findings (continued)

- "I like the idea of video interviews because of the convenience and learning opportunities. If a social worker could do appointments over video and they are able to record it confidentially, it would allow them to be able to watch the video afterwards to see if they might have missed something in the client's expression, tone, or body language. The client also might have said something important that the social worker missed during the initial interview, but noticed when watching the video."

- "Overall I think students have the potential to learn from conducting interviews using this method, and as technology expands we should continue to adapt to it."

Questions?

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THANKS!